

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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J. H. H.



Samoyed people



Above left: Peggy Gaffney with Brigid and Harry Potter; right, with a puppy.

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Peggy Gaffney
WESTERNESSE
Cheshire, Connecticut

This interview was conducted at the home of Peggy Gaffney in August 2004 by Lynne Robertson.

How long have you been in the breed, and what drew you to Sammies in the first place?

I started in 1968. The way that I got into the breed was my husband at the time, Edward, was at Cal Tech, and I joined the Cal Tech wives' needlework club. I went to the first meeting, which was held at Sally Cokelet's house. I walked up her driveway, and here was this perfectly gorgeous white dog standing in the doorway. I had never seen a Samoyed. It was an instant love affair with the breed. I absolutely fell in love with them! Sally was just starting to show her dog and she and I became friends. I went to all the shows with her, learning as much as I could while following Zeke's career. Sally showed him in obedience and had a handler for Breed. He finished by going Winners Dog at the Samoyed Club of Los Angeles Specialty. His name was Ch. Zeke Czar of Entropy CD and his father was

Ch. Sho-off's Czar of Whitecliff. Now the thinking at the time was that if you liked the son, go to the father. So while he showed, we wrote to Wilna Coulter of Whitecliff Kennels and told her, "We want a dog just like Zeke!" (laughter) The day of SGLA, she showed up with a six-week-old male puppy who turned out to be Ron, our Elrond, Czar of Rivendell, my first Samoyed. He was so named because I was a Tolkien fan. I didn't suspect at the time

that he would later go on to win the National Specialty and win Best in Show at the International with four Group I's and a Best in Show.

As I said, I got Ron at six weeks of age and immediately found out that you don't give milk to puppies, even if they seem hungry, because he had diarrhea, all over the car. We took him home and started training him to be a show dog. We went to classes when he was six months old. I was going to

show him in Breed and my husband Ed was going to show him in obedience, which he did. First Ron got his CD, and then he started training for his CDX, but he also started becoming ring-wise. He got two legs on his CDX but began playing to the crowds. He would do perfectly in all except for one exercise each show, and he would pick a different exercise each time where he would blow it and get zero. We really knew we were in trouble when at one show, he went over the jump, got the dumbbell, came back over the jump, did a perfect Breed ring triangle and stood posed in front of the judge. That is when we knew he was doing too much ring work in both Breed and obedience. (laughter)

But I was showing him in Breed. I had taken handling classes, but I really didn't know anything. I showed him a few times, but he didn't win any points because I'd get nervous. We would start with the judge pulling us out into first place, but then I would start to get nervous and the nervousness would go down the lead to Ron and he would start horsing around, we'd be moved to second, third, fourth, and in the end blow the win.



Peggy and Elrond, September 28, 1968. When we got him at the dog show. Edward took this picture. He has a cross-eyed look in this picture only because he has LONG white eyelashes.



Ch. Elrond Czar of Rivendell winning the 1971 National Specialty in New Jersey with handler James Manley.

One day the handler who had beaten us came up to me. His name was Jim Manley. He said, "I can't stand it anymore! This dog is too good for you to handle. I want to take that dog away from you." So we chatted, and decided that it would be a good idea for him to handle Ron. However, I made a deal with him. I said that I had to come along to all the shows and learn how to do this right. So he let me run and get his Cokes and wait on him hand and foot at the shows, but at the same time, taught me an awful lot

about handling dogs.

Jim took Ron out and showed him beautifully, there was an instant bond - a canine love affair. When Ron went with Jim, he won. San Gabriel Kennel Club was the third or fourth show that they'd been together. Jim showed Ron at 8am in Open and he not only won his class, he went on to take Winners Dog for two points and then Best of Winners and Best of Breed. At that time there were a lot of Samoyeds in California and it took over twenty Samoyeds for a three-

point major. We were thrilled with winning Breed, but that meant that we would have to stay around until about 5pm for the Group. I had originally groomed Ron that day, but Jim then regroomed him for the Group ring and when he was done, Ron looked perfect. They then went into the Working Group ring, which at that time contained 31 breeds, and showing like dynamite. They went Group I for a five-point major, but since there were so few majors that spring we were

lucky. The competition in the ring was outstanding and made the win that much sweeter. The other placements went to Ch. Abner Lowell Davis, the Great Dane, Ch. Bobby Sox, the Corgi, and Ch. Weinchart's A-Go-Go, the Doberman, all of whom were BIS winners and among the top dogs in the country.

Now Ron was not a big dog. He was right in the middle of the male standard, so that put him about 22 1/2 or 22 3/4 inches, however he carried an 8 1/2-inch coat. So when he was



Arwen with her litter.



Brigid and Ari asleep - snow dreams.

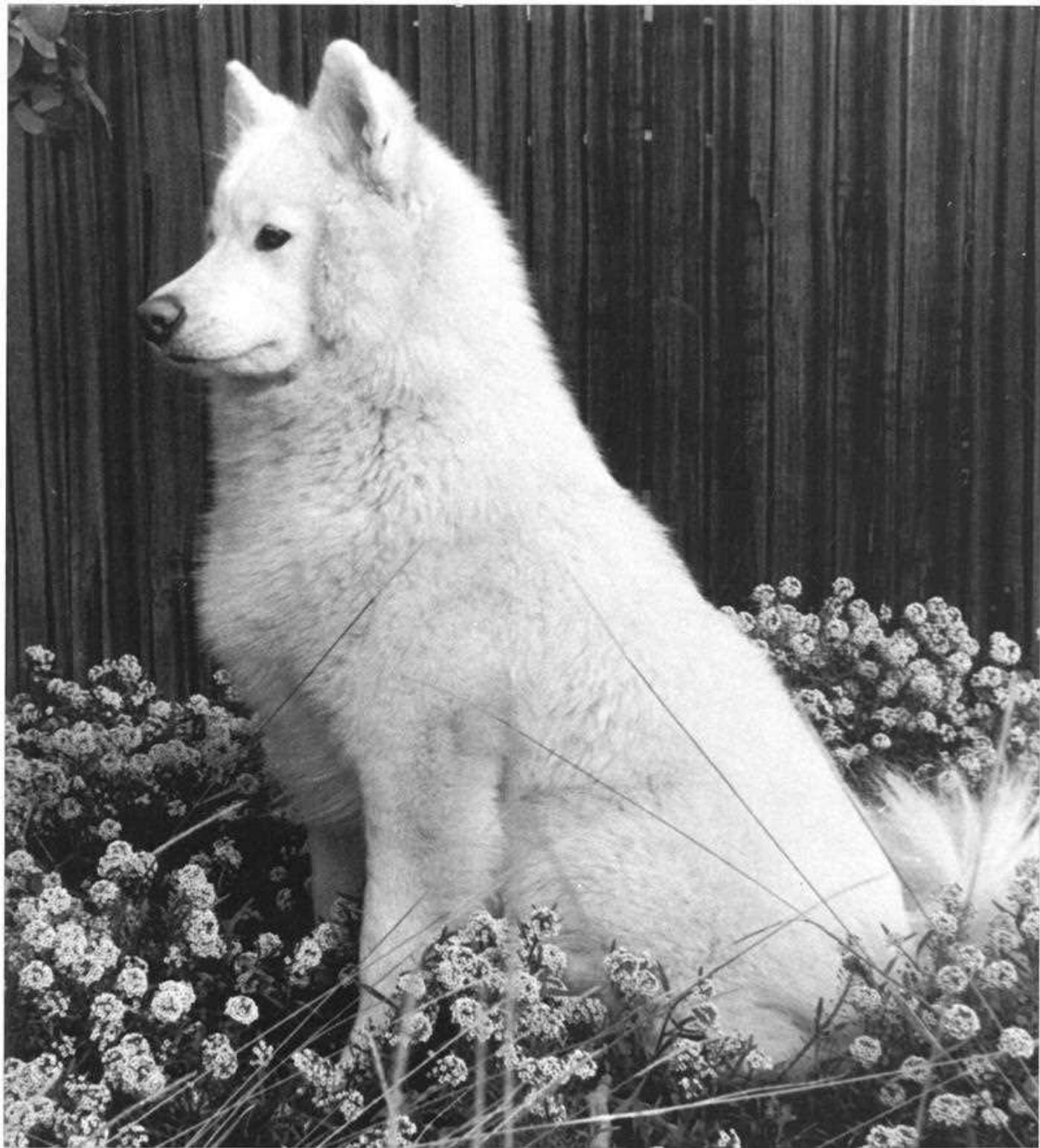
there, he was THERE in a big-time presence. He would just walk in the ring with the attitude of "Okay, I'm here, I hope all of you are watching because that's all you're going to do." He and Jim had a wonderful time. Several shows later, he finished at the Pasadena Kennel Club, just in time for him to enter the SCA National as a special. So in the National catalog for that year, even though he was entered in Best of Breed, he wasn't listed as a champion because we hadn't yet gotten the certificate.

We sent him off to the National in New Jersey with Jim, and we had to stay behind in California and work because I couldn't get vacation time. I hadn't thought to plan ahead for the National. Who knew we'd have a champion? This came up so quickly - oh, my goodness! So off they went to the National. That was in 1971.

So you were at home waiting for the phone call.

Actually we were over at Jim's house. His wife, Dorothy, had asked us over for dinner. When the call came through, Jim asked her to put me on. When I got on the phone he said, "Well, I'm sorry," and he paused, "I know you worked really, really hard, but well," pause, "the best we could do was Best of Breed." (laughter) At which point I sat in shock and looked at the phone for a second and then went nuts! I couldn't believe it. Here is our little puppy, our first Samoyed and we knew nothing, but we were so lucky at the time.

It was funny because Jim said that he had to take two seats on the plane home with one to hold the trophies. But the win hadn't come easy. It had rained so hard at the show that it came down in sheets. Since the show was outside, everyone had to gait in the pouring rain to show. Now out west we used ropes on poles between the rings, but in the east we use little fences held down with stakes. When the dogs were jostling into the ring for Best of Breed judging, trying to stay somewhat dry, Ron jumped back to get out of someone's way and sliced his paw open on the spike that was holding the fence. They were on the way into judging and Jim looked down and blood was all over the



"Kelly," our foundation bitch.

paw. He later said he thought, "I came all this way and the darn dog has cut himself going into the ring!" (laughter) Being Jim, however, he kicked mud all over the paw so the blood wouldn't show and then he proceeded to say, "Okay Ron,

we're going to show anyway." Ron would have done anything for Jim - he would have walked on water for Jim, or at least try. And they won! Jim then pulled him from the other shows. There had been a show on Friday, which Ron won, and the

Saturday show was the Specialty. But Jim pulled him from the Sunday show and flew back. We took him off the plane and straight to the vet, but in a couple of days Ron was fine. What an adventure! Never a dull moment.

Following the win at the National, Jim took Ron off to Mexico City to compete in the International. This was the only place where at the time you could earn a European championship in North America. The International spanned two week-

ends with four shows in all. Dogs competing could also earn points toward their Mexican championships. So Ron and Jim went down to do their thing and they did it big-time. In the four shows, Ron earned four Group I's and one Best in Show. In doing so, he became the first Samoyed ever to go Best in Show in Mexico and was pictured on the poster for the show the following year.

This was a wonderful time to begin showing dogs. We became members of SCLA. It's not as big a club now, but at the time, SCLA was a very big, very nurturing club. It was filled with wonderful people who had been in the breed forever and who liked to share that knowledge. When you would go to a show, you'd applaud whoever won - it didn't matter which dog had taken the Breed that day, everybody would stay, and

when the Samoyed went into the ring for Group, we would all cheer. Getting a Sam to go Group I was very rare. It was next to impossible. Judges wouldn't often put up Sams because they were "fluffy white puffballs" that didn't look as though they belonged in the Working Group. We know the Samoyed is probably the most versatile Working dog there is, but they just don't look like it.

In SCLA at the time I got to know the Wards, Bob and Dolly, and Billy (Margaret) Tucker who had been in the breed since the '40s, and Gertrude Adams and her husband who had been in it since the early '50s, and all sorts of knowledgeable people who were generous when it came to helping new people along. We would have picnics and parties where we would talk all about dogs, and about showing. We



Westernesse Brigid B. Karu at eleven months.



Ron, the first Samoyed to ever go BIS in Mexico.

learned how to get a dog to move correctly. We talked about genetics, pedigrees and breeding carefully. It was a very good way to start in the world of dogs. A lot of clubs that I've seen since are less nurturing and the members mostly talk about who is going to give trophies for the next show. I also don't see the warmth and nurturing and the cheering for one another that there was back then. I wish that attitude would come back because it made showing, whether you won or lost, a lot of fun.

This was also a time when I worked part-time as a dog photographer doing portraits. I have thousands of dog pictures I have collected over the years because of doing that, and a lot of photos of the great old dogs.

Now when Ron was a year old we decided we wanted a foundation bitch, because we were going to build our own line of Samoyeds. I had done a lot of research on type and genetics and we ended up getting a bitch puppy that was linebred White Way on her mother's side, White Krystal's Risha of Orion, and Drayalene on her father's, Ch. Nachalnik of Drayalene,

"Chief." Drayalene came directly from Whitecliff, and many of the Whitecliff dogs over the years had come from or come down from the White Way kennel.

Chief was a very good stud because, as his record showed, over the years he was noted for producing HD-clear offspring. At that time, hip dysplasia was the big thing. They were hopeful of wiping it out and had just started to x-ray dogs. I think Chief was number six or ten of the Samoyeds x-rayed. Ron was the 311th and my bitch, Kelly, was the 514th. Now the number of dogs x-rayed are in the thousands, but that was just the beginning. The breeders at that time were determined and insisted that the dogs used in breeding must be x-rayed. That was in the late '60s and early '70s. Because of the type of gene involved in HD, it has proven more difficult to wipe out than they originally thought, but at that time everyone was determined.

Carol Chittum bred the litter from which I got my foundation bitch, Kelly, whose registered name was Belaya Kabri Celebrian. Celebrian was another

er elf character from Tolkien. Over the years I've used many elf names from Tolkien, but unfortunately he doesn't have many female characters. Our kennel name, Westnesse, is what Tolkien called the place where all elves would finally go. It was their heaven.

We decided then to find out as much as possible about the dogs in our pedigrees; and since we were going to take a summer vacation, we decided to go visit as many of the dogs as we could find that were still alive. This was back in 1970, before Ron did all his big winning. Kelly was just a puppy, so we rented a camper and drove to Colorado to visit the McLaughlins at Silveracres kennel. They owned Chief and many of his descendants. At the time they had a dozen dogs in their kennel, so we got to see many of the genetic patterns he produced. Doris McLaughlin has proven a huge source of information and support over the years.

At that time I was still showing Ron, so we went up to Renton, Washington to the SCA National. I showed Ron in American Bred and got thoroughly sunburned, but didn't win anything. But I do remember that we had the banquet the night before the show, so Ron got baited with lobster. (laughter) He thought that was just fine and dandy, thank you very much. Good bait!

Then we traveled down and visited the Darius Samoyed kennel of Dan and LaVera Morgan. Darius Samoyeds came down from Drayalene and their Ch. Darius King of Snow Ridge (Ron's maternal grandfather) was a half brother of Chief. Their father was Ch. Rokandi of Drayalene, from Helene Spathold's kennel.

Next we went over to visit Wilna Coulter's Whitecliff kennel and got to see Ron's father, Ch. Sho-Off's Czar of Whitecliff and Czar's mother, Ch. Bar-cca's Dorka of Drayalene. We also visited Burt and Mary Jo Kimbell, who had bred Ron out of their Ch. Snow Princess of Darius.

The White Way kennel had by that time disbanded. Agnus Mason had retired and the old White Way dogs had been gone since the late '60s. But the genetics for this line were in Whitecliff, Drayalene, Darius,



Ron's BIS at the International in Mexico City - he won four Group I's and a BIS in two weekends.

and a few other lines. I was learning from this trip. My pedigrees now, if you look back a few generations, still have a lot of the dogs we saw. I have tried to stay as close to my original line as possible. I like what I have. Though there are other lines that I admire, I don't breed to them because they don't come down from the dogs on which I based my breeding program. For the most part I've stuck pretty close to the genetics. I started with 36 years ago.

This was a wonderful time to start in Sams since so many of the dogs that have influenced the breed were still alive.

As a side trip we went to visit the original Whitecliff kennel. We met with Percy and Lena Matheron, who had for many years co-owned the Whitecliff kennel with Jean Blank. The only Samoyed that they had left was Ch. Yurok of Whitecliff who was Czar's father and Darius, Chief, Dorka and Ron's grandfather. For

many years, Yurok held the record for being the top-winning Samoyed ever. He was about fifteen years old when we visited. When he or the other Whitecliff dogs were shown, it was always by Jean Blank, who wore a Native American dress and jewelry in the ring. She would travel around the country showing the Whitecliff show line while the Matherons took care of the breeding. This was the ORIGINAL Whitecliff kennel. They worked very hard



Ch. Westnesse Arwen Karu.

not only creating a line of outstanding dogs, but dogs with a distinctive look. When I started showing, people would stand at ringside and point to dogs that were down from Whitecliff breeding. They didn't have to look at their catalogs. It was that obvious. The look was striking with excellent coats, compact bodies and exceptionally beautiful heads. When Jean Blank and the Matherons retired from showing and breeding, they sold the kennel name to Wilna Coulter, who is now Whitecliff kennel. All her dogs were down from Whitecliff and she has worked hard to keep that distinctive look. She has kept the genetics going. Wilna was the one who picked Ron for us.

When we arrived for the visit with the Matherons, Yurok still looked good. They had got-

ten an Airedale bitch puppy that they kept as his companion. Where they lived was in Grass Valley, California, way out in the middle of nowhere. They had problems with rutting deer coming in and threatening to attack the dogs. When they noticed that Yurok had started losing his hearing, they got the Airedale bitch, who when she saw the deer would bark and run around and put up a fuss and wake him up so he would be able to defend himself. I thought that it was neat that they had gotten a hearing ear dog for another dog.

We let our dogs out of the car and Ron ran up to the fence where Yurok was. Yurok was delighted to see other Samoyeds and they fence played, play bowing and running up and down, barking away. They had a marvelous time and I'm sure

that Yurok was delighted to see Samoyeds again. I got to hug the old guy and that was a thrill. We spent most of the day there visiting and learning about all their old dogs.

Lena took us to a room that was almost as big as my studio, about 300 square feet, and it was filled with Yurok's trophies. She had already given away many of his trophies to two specialties, but tons were left, some really beautiful and hand-carved. Yurok showed a lot when campaigned. They used to have three or four shows in a weekend in different states and he would show in the morning in one and then fly and show the next morning someplace else.

While campaigning, he traveled all over and he won everywhere! He held the title of top-winning Samoyed in history up until the early '70s.

It was a great visit and I sat and listened to these people who knew so much. Lena Matheron looked at Ron and said that he looked EXACTLY like Yurok's father, Ch. Omak. Ch. Omak was a small dog who had the same very soft expression as Ron. Yurok was more of a striking dog, bigger with a lot of strong presence. Lena didn't think that Kelly was a very pretty bitch but she felt that she was structurally sound.

The dog I'm showing now that I call Harry Potter looks



Harry Potter (two points).



Ross, the dog who started at nine months (first point) and finished at nine years under Dolly Ward.

more like Yurok. Harry's registered name is Westnesse HP Wizard Karu. HP stands for Harry Potter because I had taught school and was a librarian and literature teacher for years. I personally think that the Harry Potter books are the best things to have happened to the world of literature for a long time. J.K. Rowling has gotten more kids to read than any reading program for the last 30 years. She did what I've been telling people to do for years, she gave the children something

worth reading.

I was lucky in Sams to have good mentors. I would write letters to Doris McLaughlin, Wilna Coulter, or Bernice Heliniski with a question and I'd get back a four-page letter saying, "If you think this is happening ..., " whatever was the answer to my problem. It was wonderful. We didn't have email then, we had the U.S. Post Office and a stamp, and we wrote long letters. It was just a very nice time to be starting off in dogs.

This advice came in handy when I bred Kelly for the first time. She was bred to Madeline Druse's Ch. Ruble and had a litter of four puppies. The breeding and choice of stud was part of my contract in purchasing Kelly along with the pick of litter going to Kelly's breeder. Kelly had a nice normal pregnancy. And we had been to shows right up until the last minute because she was going for her CD. I remember when trying for the leg two weeks before she whelped her litter,

she didn't qualify because she had fallen asleep in the ring on the long down. Never show a pregnant bitch! (laughter) You couldn't hide the fact that she was asleep because she began to snore.

Anyway, she whelped her litter normally and everything seemed fine for several days. Then suddenly in the middle of the night I woke up to the puppies screaming. We luckily had a good vet in Glendale Small Animal Hospital so we called them up and said we didn't



Westernesse Seamus F. Karu.

know what was going on, but we were going to rush everybody in. Luckily they were there 24 hours and also this was a teaching hospital type of clinic and they had incubators. This was my first experience with breed catastrophes. What they did was immediately diagnose the problem as canine herpes virus. They put the puppies into incubators, because herpes attacks the puppies when they are born with subnormal temperatures. The incubators got their temperatures up and stopped the damage. If left unattended, the virus attacks the tissue of the lungs, which causes the puppies to drown in their own blood. Because of the timing of the disease, Kelly must have been exposed to it very late in her pregnancy, probably when she was at the dog show. I do know that one of the children who was playing with her came down with chicken pox immediately after the show. I don't know for sure that this was the cause, but some of the studies feel it is. I didn't think that these puppies had the genetics I was looking for, so all were sold.

I did not know it was transfer-

able from humans to dogs.

This is still being studied and I am not a vet, but from various articles I have read, it seems that this is possible. It is mostly transferable between dogs. Almost all dogs have the virus dormant in their systems because of their normal temperatures. However, if your pregnant bitch is exposed to a dog who is having a flare-up, or a person, the puppies could be affected. To be on the safe side, don't take your pregnant bitches around little kids. The upside of this is that they develop an immunity that is passed on to the next generation. The only problem for Kelly was that she had to go onto antibiotics and that meant that the litter had to be bottle-fed around the clock. Good training for later when I nursed my son.

At this time we added a third dog to the kennel. Ros, whose registered name was Taras Elros of Westernesse, was out of Skip and Nancy Alexander's Ch. Blizzard of Snowline CD and Ch. Taras Patruska of Whitecliff, who was a Czar daughter. I admired both his parents and Patricia was a sister

to Zeke, the dog who first inspired me to get into the world of Samoyeds. Blizzard's pedigree went back to the Ward's old Starchak line and through that to White Way. Ros was a fantastic dog. For one thing, everyone who saw him agreed that his movement was flawless. You could have balanced a glass of water on his back and he'd have gone around the ring and stayed dry. The word smooth always came up when describing him, plus he looked great all his life.

The last Sam I bought to make up my breeding plan was a lovely bitch from Canada. Her name was Polardale's Winter Snow and she was a Chief granddaughter. She had been named Snowy by her breeders, but I called her Happy, which fit her personality so well. For me, Snowy was Ron's mother. Her father was Am/Can Ch. Silveracres Winter Chief, "Teddy." She was wonderful to show and had the best harsh coat I'd ever seen. You could bathe her two hours before a show and her coat would be dry and crisp and ready for the ring when we entered. These four Samoyeds were going to be the basis of my

breeding to establish my line. At least that was the plan. However plans do not always work out the way they should.

My husband finished his PhD at Cal Tech and started working. We had moved into a new house, changing location from Altadena, California down to Cardiff by the Sea, which is north of San Diego, to be near my husband's new job. I was getting very active in the breed, showing Kelly and Ros and doing dog club activities. I was pregnant, but why not?

We decided to breed Kelly to Czar, Ron's father. This time the pregnancy went beautifully and they had nine puppies. All was going well, I had three males and two bitches that I thought would make good show dogs. Wilna came to visit and bought one of the pet puppies for a friend of hers. She was delighted with the breeding. Then suddenly the pick male started acting strangely. His face took on a contorted look to the point where his ears crossed, and his movement was erratic. Worried about this I took him to two local vets, but each said, "Oh, it's only a teething problem, don't worry about it, the puppy is fine." Well, I worried. The other eight puppies weren't behaving like this.

The evening after the second vet visit, we had a meeting of the Samoyed Club of San Diego at our house because we were planning the specialty. Ruth Mary Heckerroth was on the committee and she had been breeding Samoyeds for years, but was also familiar with other animals. When I told her about the puppy, we went to look at it. She took one look and said, "This puppy has tetanus." She had me take him to her vet, which was Main Street Small Animal Hospital in San Diego. By that time, it was too late to save the puppy. However, all the other dogs were given the series of shots to prevent it happening to them. The cause turned out to be something simple but unexpected. The land where our new house stood had been part of a horse farm. Horses carry tetanus and what the vet figured out after examining the puppy and the soil, was that the tetanus spores can live in the soil for up to 30 years. The puppies were chewing on everything they could find, as puppies

will do, and had been chewing on some rocks that they had dug up in one of their excavations to China. Apparently the puppy chipped his tooth on the stone and the tetanus entered the bloodstream through this broken tooth, and that's what led to his death. I was very upset at the two vets who told me not to worry since the puppy might have lived if he had been treated earlier, but I was told not to blame them. The occurrence of tetanus in dogs is extremely rare, many vets never see it in their entire careers. Luckily, the vets at Main Street had seen it and so only the first puppy was lost.

So here we were in a new house with a dozen dogs. My baby arrived a month early. In fact, he came on the day I was to drive from up to the LA area for the baby shower that my dog friends were throwing. I called to beg off from the party from my hospital room but was able to tell them that it was a boy.

Sean was born with what at the time was diagnosed as club feet, but later found that it was something else. So when he was a few hours old, he got his first of many casts on his legs. I remember lying on the delivery table and when the doctor said that there was something wrong with his legs, my first question was, "Is he dysplastic?" The doctor told me, "No, but we're going to put his legs in casts and he's going to need a great deal of work before he'll walk." My next question was to ask if it was correctable and was told it was. So, I said, "Then that's not a problem." The doctor thought that I was crazy not to be having hysterics, but I'd brought too many puppies into the world to be panicking over something that was correctable. My husband, not realizing how impatient the baby was, was off delivering a scientific paper in Washington DC when our son Sean Patrick arrived but he flew back in time to see him in his first of many sets of casts. Two days later Sean went home to be greeted by a dozen dogs.

Finding good show homes for puppies is a lot of work. Most people looking for puppies want pets. We were able to place the pets easily and the show puppies eventually found good homes. There had been

three show males in the litter, but of course, the one had died. The other two were very closely matched in both looks and movement. We held on to the four show prospects for a while and started showing them at matches. We did preliminary HD screening on them and all the results came out good, so we were confident that they would work well in our breeding program.

Peggy Borcharding decided that she had had enough of editing the Samoyed Club of America Bulletin and was going to retire, so she asked me to edit it. I thought that it was a wonderful idea. When I began doing the Bulletin, I immediately found a problem. Peggy had been in St. Louis and had the same printer forever who gave

her a very good price based on when they started doing the Bulletin. With me in California, the club was suddenly faced with printing rates that were astronomical and printers who didn't have the experience printing photos of white dogs. There was no way I could find a printer who could do the kind of quality work that Peggy had for the same amount of money. There were not personal computers at that time so every word had to be typed and every letter of the display type put in by hand. It was a very labor-intensive job. Also, it had been a one-person job for years with no mailing service. So all the labeling, and mailing of approximately 1,200 bulletins added to the work; plus, each photo had to be mailed back to its owner.

I am so glad that the world of technology, plus a staff, has made the operation easier today.

At the same time, we were remodeling the house, and getting the dogs trained and ready for the National which was to be in the Bay Area that year. We had decided which puppy we would keep, and sold a beautiful male to John Studebaker. He became Ch. Czar's Nicholas of Westernesse. He was a very showy dog. We also sold the second pick bitch, Westernesse Lorien, to a kennel back East. She was bred just before she was two years old and had a litter of four-and-a-half-pound puppies. The kennel owner had her x-rayed for her official HD evaluation right after the puppies were born and the x-ray came back dysplastic. I was horrified,



Ron and Jim Manley after winning the Specialty.

since she had such a fantastic x-ray just six months earlier, but I had them return her and gave back their money. Of course no one knew at the time what we know now that if you x-ray when a bitch is in season or for a period before or after, or if you x-ray right after the bitch has whelped, the x-ray will always read that the bitch is dysplastic, even if she isn't. Apparently all the puppies turned out fine.

With much of the litter sold, and only six dogs in the kennel, I was asked by a publisher to write a book on the Samoyed. They had read some of the columns I had been writing for the AKC *Gazette* and thought that I would be the one to do the job. This was the first time in my life that I wasn't working a paying job, but this was definitely work. The only difference was that this was all dog related and was for the most part fun.

Things were about to change, however, because my husband decided at this time that he was leaving the marriage. Since I would be a single parent with a baby needing therapy, I knew I had to change my life because I would now have to go back to work. The first change was to ask Peggy Borcharding to take back the Bulletin. I then contacted Jan Kauzlarich to take over writing the book for me. She graciously did and it was published under the title *Your Samoyed*. Six was a large number of dogs for one lady with a baby, so I decided to sell Happy to John and Sharon Waite, whom we had met at the San Diego specialty and who liked her a lot. They loved showing her and finished her championship.

Finding the perfect person to co-own the last male puppy turned out to be a surprise. Sandy Spiegel was a teenager when she contacted me about wanting a show male. However, she seemed to have such an excellent idea on how that dog should be handled that I agreed, and it turned out to be the best possible home. The puppy was named Westernesse Remember Ron (because he reminded me so much of him), called "Junior," and Sandy took him on to win his American and Canadian championships, plus his CD. She then managed his stud career very wisely and

every dog I presently have in my kennel is down from Junior.

So I was down to four dogs, Ron, Kelly, Ros, and my pick bitch Westernesse Evenstar, who was already pointed and a beautiful show girl. Sean Patrick and I moved back to New England, where I'd grown up and where I still had two brothers and a twin sister. My brother helped us to find a place near his family in Holliston, Massachusetts, which turned out to be a house with a built-in kennel in the basement. It worked out perfectly. I had already met Roberta Baird, of Karandash Samoyeds in Rhode Island, because she had been to visit when her husband was on sabbatical in California. Roberta helped me to get to know the other Samoyed owners in the area. They were just starting to form a club which became the Greater Worcester Samoyed Club, which later evolved into Minuteman Samoyed Club.

I started showing the dogs again on a limited basis, due to lack of time and money. Ron I retired because he didn't really have anything left to prove. I concentrated on Ros and Star, both of whom were really good and deserved their chance. I took Ros out and got his CD. I was able to get to only a few shows each year, but not too many. I kept my hand in on the national level writing a column for *The Samoyed Quarterly*.

I moved to Connecticut, where I had grown up and where I still had my teaching credentials, though there weren't many jobs available at the time. I worked as a secretary at various places until I finally got a job in my old school where I'd taught before I got married, and thank goodness - insurance. Sean had a lot of medical bills because it turned out that he had been born with spina bifida. I had stayed home with him until he could walk, but then had to find child care so I could support us. One thing about walking late, he taught himself to read very early so as not to get bored. When he was in nursery school, they put on a Christmas pageant, and everyone was thrilled when Sean was able to read the whole story of Christmas while the other children acted out their parts in the pageant. Little did I realize, at the time, that elementary school

would be a nightmare for him because of this very thing.

Only his kindergarten teacher was pleased with a gifted student. He tested eighth grade, sixth month in reading when he started kindergarten, but at the same time he still had problems with walking and balance. That made him a prime victim for other children, as well as some ignorant teachers over the years. Luckily he was born with a good sense of humor, so he survived. He went through years of physical therapy so now the only noticeable effect is that he walks somewhat flat-footed. I often had to lock horns with the administration. I was teaching in another town, so I could quote the state law in regard to teaching the gifted to them when they gave him grief.

Sean loved going to dog shows with me then. He liked all the booths with books and developed favorite authors. For years he had a collection of the writings of Maxwell Riddle, whose humor and clever dog stories appealed to Sean's sense of fun. I liked Riddle for being one of the many judges over the years who put up my dogs.

Star and Ros had been bred and whelped a litter in Massachusetts just before we moved to Connecticut. I kept a bitch, Westernesse Rosie O'Grady, from that breeding with the plan to use her along with her mother to continue my line. I had to stop showing Star soon after moving to Connecticut when she injured her hip and back. She was sleeping in the kitchen one evening and was suddenly startled awake jumping up. Unfortunately while she had slept, her leg had slipped under the dishwasher. When she jumped up, she caught the leg, tearing ligaments and muscles in the hip, pelvis and back. This left her with a permanent limp and though she was OFA good, I wasn't able to breed her again because the vet argued that the weight of a litter on her pelvis and back could leave her unable to walk. I couldn't do that to her, so she just lived out her life in retirement.

That left me Ros and Rosie to show. I concentrated on Ros, but was having trouble being able to afford the show game. However, I got to a few shows each year. And there is a story in that as well.

Now Ros got his first points when he was nine months old in California. Carole (Barnum) Cheesman and Mary Mayfield helped show him since I got too big with my pregnancy to run around the ring. After I moved back East he'd get the points when I would take him out, but that was only a couple of times each year. After a while, still needing his last major, I realized that he wasn't getting any younger and if I wanted this done, I shouldn't wait. I noticed that Dolly Ward would be judging at the Longshore-Southport KC show not far from where I lived, which was always a major, so I entered Ros. I was hoping he'd win, but even more I was looking forward to seeing Dolly again. Now in spite of his age, Ros was in great shape. He still had his "water-glass" movement, which must have impressed Dolly because she awarded him the major, finishing his championship.

While we were standing around waiting for photos to be taken, I chatted with Dolly about all my old friends out West. She told me how pleased she was that I was still breeding and showing good young dogs. She asked if this was a Blizzard grandson, since he looked so much like him and I had that nice son of his that I'd shown out West. I told her, "No, Dolly, this is the dog I showed out West." "He couldn't be," she said, "that was at least eight years ago." "Yes," I told her, "He's nine years old." She was amazed, thinking that she was putting up a three- or four-year-old Samoyed. Ros looked young until the day he died. I only wish that I'd had the money to use him more in my breeding program because he was so sound.

Ros also had one of the best personalities I've ever known in a Sam. Sean used him and Kelly to learn to walk. He'd pull himself up on them and they'd move slowly with Sean holding on. Ros never got impatient with all the pulled hair from Sean's struggles to keep himself upright and never tried to rush him. I remember being at a show when Sean was a baby and I was by myself. After showing Ros, I had to go into the ring with Star. I put Ros on a down (he was obedience trained) and set a sleeping Sean



Peggy with "Ria," Westnesse Alteriel Karu (pointed).

between his legs with his head on Ros's chest. I told him to guard the baby and went into the ring. I could see them so I

didn't worry. However, apparently a reporter thought that a dog babysitter was unusual, because when I came out of the

ring, he asked permission to use a picture he'd taken, which ended up on the front page of the newspaper the next day.

After I finished Ros, I didn't do much showing for a while. I couldn't afford it. I had a son to raise and put through college,

and this was the time when there was an abundance of teachers and we would be laid off each year only to be hired back when various grants or monies came through. I was also caring for my mother, an aunt and two uncles all of whom were in their 80s and who died one after another over a period of six years.

My dogs were also growing old. After Ron retired from showing, he would get bored just sitting around the house, so I used to take him to school with me occasionally. He loved all the noise and the children. The last year of his life, he was adopted as a mascot by a primary special education class at the school. I would leave him with them during the day and they would take him for walks, or brush him, or in the case of some children who had trouble communicating with people, just talk to him. This became a hard time for him, since the arthritis that he'd developed from all the jumping he'd done training for his CDX (the jumps were much higher then) had damaged his joints. The day he died, there was a special education picnic at a nearby park. The teacher asked me to bring Ron since they hadn't seen him in a while. He was having trouble standing for any length of time, but for the sake of the children, I brought him. We arrived before they did and I settled him next to a picnic table. All the children rushed up and hugged him and he got many kisses on the nose, all of which he greatly enjoyed. Then I asked the teacher to take them for a walk and while they were out of sight, I carried Ron to the car, took him to the vet and had him put down. It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do and I cried all the way home. He was my first Sam and will always hold a big space in my heart. The only thing that helped was having all the other dogs who needed me.

Slowly over the following years, age caught up with my dogs and I lost Kelly, Ros, Star and Rosie, and it came to the point where I didn't have a bitch to continue my line. Now Frances Powers, in Vermont of Whitecliff-Karu kennels, had a breeding program that included my Junior prominently. She had also bred one of her bitches

to John Studebaker's Ch. Czar's Nicholas of Westnesse. I got a bitch puppy to co-own from this breeding, Whitecliff's Westnesse Lily. She ended up looking more like Ron than any bitch I'd ever owned. She too had an eight-inch coat and a beautiful head. Though I showed her, she didn't finish. However, I bred her and kept her puppy, who Sean named Westnesse Charisma after a horse that was showing in the Olympics, because he really had joy and style. However, Chris was not structurally a good show dog. What he became,

Club. This group, whose main purpose is to provide inexpensive obedience training classes for the public, also was heavily involved in therapy work and in demonstrating obedience to the public through a parade drill team. Chris and I joined the group and loved it.

What is the group called?

We just call it the drill team. What we do is march in a series of intricate formations with the dogs, working the various obedience commands into the routines. There is nothing more impressive to see than two lines with about a dozen dogs of dif-

ing. The dogs thrived on the work and the attention. These parades were several miles long in all kinds of weather, but the dogs worked beautifully no matter what. I have been active with this group ever since with various dogs of mine down through the years, and I'm presently teaching a new crop of marchers in a class I'm running through the club called Obedience to Music. We also use the marching when we visit hospitals, schools and nursing homes.

When Lily was about twelve she had a very bad reaction to a rabies shot and died. I was really upset and called Frances to tell her. Luckily she had just whelped a litter and had another bitch for me to co-own. Sean named her Whitecliff's Katarina Karu and she was a really live wire out of her Ch. Whitecliff's Sugar Ray Karu and Ch. Whitecliff's Rasin' Kana Karu. I started training her for show right away. She had a natural joy and played by the hour with Chris. Their favorite activity was digging holes all over the yard. Chris was now ten years old and Katie still a puppy. Katie was running and playing with him in the yard one day, doing her favorite thing of jumping over his back. I was watching them out the window, when suddenly I heard a scream. Katie had landed on Chris's back knocking them both to the ground. She got up and barked at Chris, but he didn't move.

I rushed out and found that he couldn't stand. Thinking that she might have broken his leg, I quickly put her away and then carried Chris to the car. Luckily the vet was close, though when I got there I had to wait what seemed forever for him to be looked at (I've changed vets). After examining him and doing x-rays, he was diagnosed with two crushed disks, one at the top of his spine and one at the bottom. The doctor told me I would have to put him down, that he would never walk and that it would be cruel to keep him going in this condition.

I carried him out to their side yard to say a final tearful good-bye. The doctor came out to go over the paperwork with me and I left Chris under a tree and walked over to the doorway to sign everything. I was talking to the vet, when I felt a bang



In parade mode.

though, was my first parade dog.

At this time I moved to my present home in Cheshire, Connecticut and eventually found kindred spirits in the members of the Cheshire Dog Training

ferent breeds on the stand-stay with their handlers marching in a circle around the group. It's especially impressive considering that bands are playing, children are screaming, muskets are being shot, and sirens are wail-

against my leg and looked down. There was Chris lying at my feet. Neither of us had seen him cross the twenty feet from the tree to the door, but there he was!

I knew that I couldn't give up without a fight. So over the doctor's objections, but with some steroids to help with pain, I took him home. The doctor told me to call the next day and that his partner would handle putting Chris down.

When I carried Chris from the car to the yard, I set him down to open the gate. He couldn't balance at all and immediately fell over. So leaving him down, I went into the garage where I sometimes kenneled the dogs when I was at school and got some hog wire fencing to build a narrow pen which I had thought up as I drove home. I set up two fence pieces about two and a half feet apart, and twelve feet long with a gate at one end. Then I put six inches of wood shavings on the floor and this was where I carried Chris. When he tried to stand, he would fall to the side, but with the fence, he didn't fall down, instead he had a "wall" to lean on and therefore could relieve himself with some dignity.

I got to spend a lot of time in that pen. After two weeks on the steroids, he came off all medicine. Every day I would sit with him, massaging his back and working on getting him to stand and eventually walk. I would sing to him and he would howl along. Slowly he began to show improvement. It took a good six months to get him so that he could walk with ease around the yard, but he did. He never liked slick flooring and preferred walking than to standing because the balancing was easier, and walk he did - right back into the vet's office for his annual shots. The vet could barely believe that it was the same dog.

In the meantime, Katie had now been taught gentle play and she and Chris became the best of friends. When she had a litter of puppies, it was Chris who spent the most time with the litter and he taught them how to behave. He was the best "puppy trainer" I ever had and they all loved him.

I finally ended up having to put Chris down when the arthri-

tis that was brought on by the accident got too much for him, but this didn't happen until he was fifteen and a half years old. I got an extra five and a half wonderful years with this sweet Samoyed. Though he was not a

kitchen and put a plate of steak scraps on the floor and all you'll see is six very busy heads trying to be the "firstest with the mostest." However, no fights; not even a curled lip. This doesn't mean they never have

I finally convinced her that ears and tail could be up at the same time, she was lovely and judges really appreciated her femininity as well as her excellent structure. She finished nicely.

Then I started showing Ria. What a difference! Ria was all, "Hail fellow, well met!" She LOVED the shows and everything about them. She was very flashy with a good coat, good movement and biscuit ears, but her most outstanding characteristic was her style. Not since Ron had I had a Sam with that walked into the ring with an attitude that demanded everyone look at her. Now, there were a lot of really nice bitches at the time and I only show in Bred-by class, but she went out and quickly accumulated points until she only needed her last major. Along the way she had gotten a Bred-by Group III and a Group II.

I was having so much fun that I was devastated when she went out playing in the woods at the back of my property and injured her eyes. I took her to Dr. Donovan, north of Boston, who is a canine eye specialist, and he said that she must have gotten a blow to the head that caused the retina to detach, and that I could expect secondary glaucoma to set in and eventually she would lose both eyes. Well, what he said was true and I had to have both eyes removed over the next two years. Everyone told me that if I didn't move any furniture, she'd be fine. Well, I'm here to tell you that you can scramble furniture every day and this bitch will just roll with the punches. She still has style, and since the eyes were removed, she just looks as though she's sleepwalking.

Now, the way dogs in a pack such as my six establish pecking order is by eye contact - giving the evil eye gets the dog who is lower in the pecking order to back off. However, if you don't have eyes, that doesn't work. Ria IMMEDIATELY moved to the top of the pecking order and there she stays. She will walk up to any of the others and take a chew out of their mouth and they don't say boo. She's eight years old and living LARGE!

How long has she been that way?

She had her eyes removed last year and managed to sur-



Am/Can Ch. Westernesse Remember Ron CD.

great show dog, he was definitely a great Samoyed.

Katie turned out to be a good mother. I did a linebreeding to Ch. Whitecliff's Saruka Karu, who was also down from Junior. Against all advice, I kept three puppies from the litter of six. I named them all for Tolkien characters, Westernesse Aragorn Karu, Ari, Westernesse Arwen Karu, Arwen, and Westernesse Altariel Karu, Ria. Now prevailing wisdom will tell you that it is not wise to keep littermates together, but I'm here to tell you that I've now done it twice and it works beautifully if you remember one rule. Never separate them. I presently have six Samoyeds; three from one litter now eight years old, and three from another now two years old. Since I don't separate them, they all get along. I can at any time have all six in the

words. I'm a firm believer in letting dogs set their own pecking order and occasionally reminders come in the form of nano-scuffles. These rarely last as long as twenty seconds, and they usually end with everybody kissing and licking everybody else. I haven't had any damage or blood drawn, and for the most part am finding that as the young dogs age, the scuffles are very rare because pecking order is already settled.

I showed Ari, but he didn't have the best rear even though he was OFA excellent, so I concentrated on Arwen, whom I co-owned with Frances. Arwen is a very good Samoyed but her philosophy of showing was not outgoing. She was more the "show me your passport and three other kinds of identification," in her manner with people. However, in the ring, once

vive a house remodel that moved furniture everywhere without so much as a blink. She also wants every workman to fuss over her. If they're afraid of dogs - too bad.

Three years ago Frances and I decided to breed Arwen. She took her out West for a breeding, but she was exposed, somewhere during her pregnancy to herpes virus, and lost the litter. She was put on a course of antibiotics and recovered well enough to be bred again, however this time we decided to fly the semen in rather than have her travel. All the arrangements were made, and at about 8:45 on the morning of September 11, we left to go to a vet who specialized in this procedure and who was located near the airport. As I was leaving, Sean called from work to say a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. By the time I reached the vet's office the other three planes had crashed. We waited and waited for the sperm to arrive, but it didn't. The FedEx office was inside the airport, and suddenly all airports were shut down. I took her home and spent the rest of the day trying to track the sperm in between the shocking news reports.

The next day I went back

up to the vet's office and finally at the end of the day, it arrived. It had sat in the heat on a loading dock for over 24 hours. The vet checked the sperm and was surprised to find about half still alive and moving, so she went ahead and implanted them. Neither of us was thinking clearly at the time, because along with the sperm implant also went some of the culture in which the sperm were shipped. This culture, a perfect growing medium for bacteria, had been sitting in the sun in 90-degree temperatures. Arwen developed a massive infection from this, lost the puppies and almost died.

Now most people would read the writing on the wall and quit. Frances and I don't claim such wisdom and when Arwen's uterus was declared clean and free of infection, we decided to try one more time; only this time to use Frances' eleven-year-old proven stud, Ch. Whitecliff's Blak Jocque Karu. Sixty-three days later, Arwen delivered four beautiful puppies, three boys and a girl, in under two hours, smiling all the way. Like her mother, she was a super mom. Three of the puppies looked really nice, so I found a pet home for the fourth. The three who remained were named Westnesse HP Wizard

Karu, called Harry Potter for his fixation with the broom during his puppyhood, Westnesse Seamus F. Karu (none of my friends would let me use the "Ron" name again), and Westnesse Brigid B Karu. The B stands for bitch, which she was in every sense of the word as a puppy and can also be now. She doesn't have an off-button. All the puppies had fun when I took them to the SCA National and they got to stay in my sweater booth. Lots of people to play with.

Over the years I've worked in some capacity at five Nationals. They are all hectic, though being herding secretary for the National in Sturbridge, Massachusetts was one of the biggest challenges. The girl who had agreed to do the job backed out with less than six months to go. I got drafted, which meant finding a site, a judge, organizing all the paperwork and getting AKC and AHBA okays. This was a bigger challenge because I didn't herd. My vet, Ellen Adomelis, though, is both an obedience and herding judge, and with a little begging I got her to agree to judge the trial, and she walked me through all the paperwork. That show was a case of over-work.

I had started a business knitting custom sweaters for members of the dog fancy and this was my first show with the sweaters. To add to the fun, the Samfans quilt group, of which I'm a charter member, had been formed and we had made and were raffling off our first quilt. I was showing all three young dogs plus running the herding. Arwen went fifth in Bred-by Bitch which pleased me very much since Ari hadn't made the cut. Ria however, chose to come in season big-time the night before showing, so I pulled her. Since Sturbridge was only a little over an hour from home, I continued to teach all day for the beginning of the week and would commute to the show after work for activities. I was able to get the final few days off and stayed at the show. The timing of the National is always hard on teachers since it comes so soon after the start of school. The herding trial was scheduled for the last day of the show and though it was rainy and cold, I think that everyone had a good time.

The last show where I over-worked was in Pennsylvania. I had the puppies and adult bitches with me, though I had the good sense not to add showing to the load. As I said before, the puppies played in my booth all day while I sold sweaters. However, my contribution to the show was the pedigree book. The theme of the show was "Reflections" and I came up with the idea (I have no one but myself to blame) of doing the souvenir booklet titled *Reflections - An Illustrated Pedigree Guide to the American Samoyed*. Since when I had been editor of the *SCA Bulletin* there was a practice of giving any Samoyed owner whose dog finished a title any full page with a photo of the dog and a three-generation pedigree. The cost to members was only \$10, so it was very much enjoyed. I talked to the printer, who had been doing the *Minuteman Samoyed Club Bulletin* which I edited for the previous five years, and he said that he could easily match that price if the book came camera-ready. So everyone was notified, and this is where the "be careful what you wish for" part comes in. It turned out to be so popular that it was 450 pages long plus index when it was done. I got it done in twelve weeks - threw out my back - and then had to rent a larger van than mine to get all the books, dogs, sweaters, and stuff to the National. At the end of the show I was asked to do it the following year by members of their committee. I think my answer was, "In your dreams!"

It is my philosophy that when you join a club, you should work hard to make the club's activities a success. I have worked many SCA National Specialties in various jobs and edited the *SCA Bulletin*. I was editor of the *Minuteman Samoyed Club Bulletin* for years and I have taught and continue to teach obedience as part of the Cheshire Dog Training Club. The payment for all of the above was zero. However, the reward was great. I love my breed very much. Making the Samoyed world better is a responsibility I treasure.

When I retired a few years ago from being a teacher/librarian after 25 years in the public schools, I knew that the retirement wouldn't support me, but I had started a business, Kanine



Ron chosen as "Dog World's" 1972 Dog of the Year.



Ari.

Knits: Sweaters for the Dog Fancy, that combined my love of knitting, which I had done from about the age of four, with my ability to design, and my love of dogs. I started, of course, with about four Samoyed design sweaters which I exhibited. People would then order a style they liked in any color they wanted and I would knit exactly to their requirements. Well, the concept caught on and now not only do I have many more Samoyed designs, I

have designed sweaters for over a hundred different breeds. I show the sweaters mostly in the Northeast, but have been repeatedly invited to show at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship, which is an honor. I have made friends in many breeds, which has given me a deeper understanding of the world of dogs.

I'm no longer a spring chick-en, however, and knitting hundreds of sweaters is a lot of physical work. So though I still design and knit every day, I am planning ahead. This year I started creating a series of design books, one per breed, that will have bunches of sweaters to knit. I also have in the works two series using the same premise of one book per breed, with one series on quilting and the other on various forms of needlework, i.e., cross-stitch, needlepoint, etc. The first books of the knitting series are near publication and will be out this winter, so people should watch for *The Crafty Samoyed - Knits*. I've always loved design, so with all those breeds, and all

those books, I should be busy for a very long time. Plus, this way other people can knit my sweater designs.

In the meantime, I've started showing the younger generation and Harry Potter got his first two points recently. Seamus has been training to get his CGC and TDI and hopefully will be my first Rally dog in the newest class of obedience. Brigid is growing her blown coat back and will be out in the show ring soon.

It sounds like you are really into dogs.

Dogs are my life! Or at least they have been a large part of it.

Is there anything else you hope to accomplish in the future, or is there anything you could dream big about, what would that be?

Other than to win another National Specialty, I don't know. It would be nice to win something big again, but I'm not financially in a position to campaign a dog, and that's necessary for big wins. I always show in Bred-by, which makes winning harder with some judges, but to me is the only place to be.



Aragorn as a puppy.

If you go to the trouble of breeding something of which you are proud, my philosophy is to let the world know.

I guess I'll just keep on doing what I have been doing. Keeping my line going, showing the dogs, teaching, writing, designing, and trying new things as they come along. The world of Samoyeds in a wonderful place to be.

*Thank you very much.
You're welcome. •*

CHICAGOLAND SAMOYED CLUB, INC.

22nd Annual Specialty & Sweepstakes

DATE:
LOCATION:

Saturday, June 18, 2005
Lake County Fairgrounds
Ill. Rt. 120 West of U.S. Rt. 45
Grayslake, Illinois

JUDGES:

All Regular & Non-Regular Classes
Mr. Terry Temple
Sweepstakes: **Mrs. Cheryl A. Wagner**

CLOSING DATE:

June 1, 2005

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SHOW SECRETARY:
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Joyce Phillips: (815) 434-4030
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Shows Preceding and Following our Specialty:

Friday, June 17, 2005: Little Fort Kennel Club

Sunday, June 19, 2005: Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club

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LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT OUR 22nd SPECIALTY!