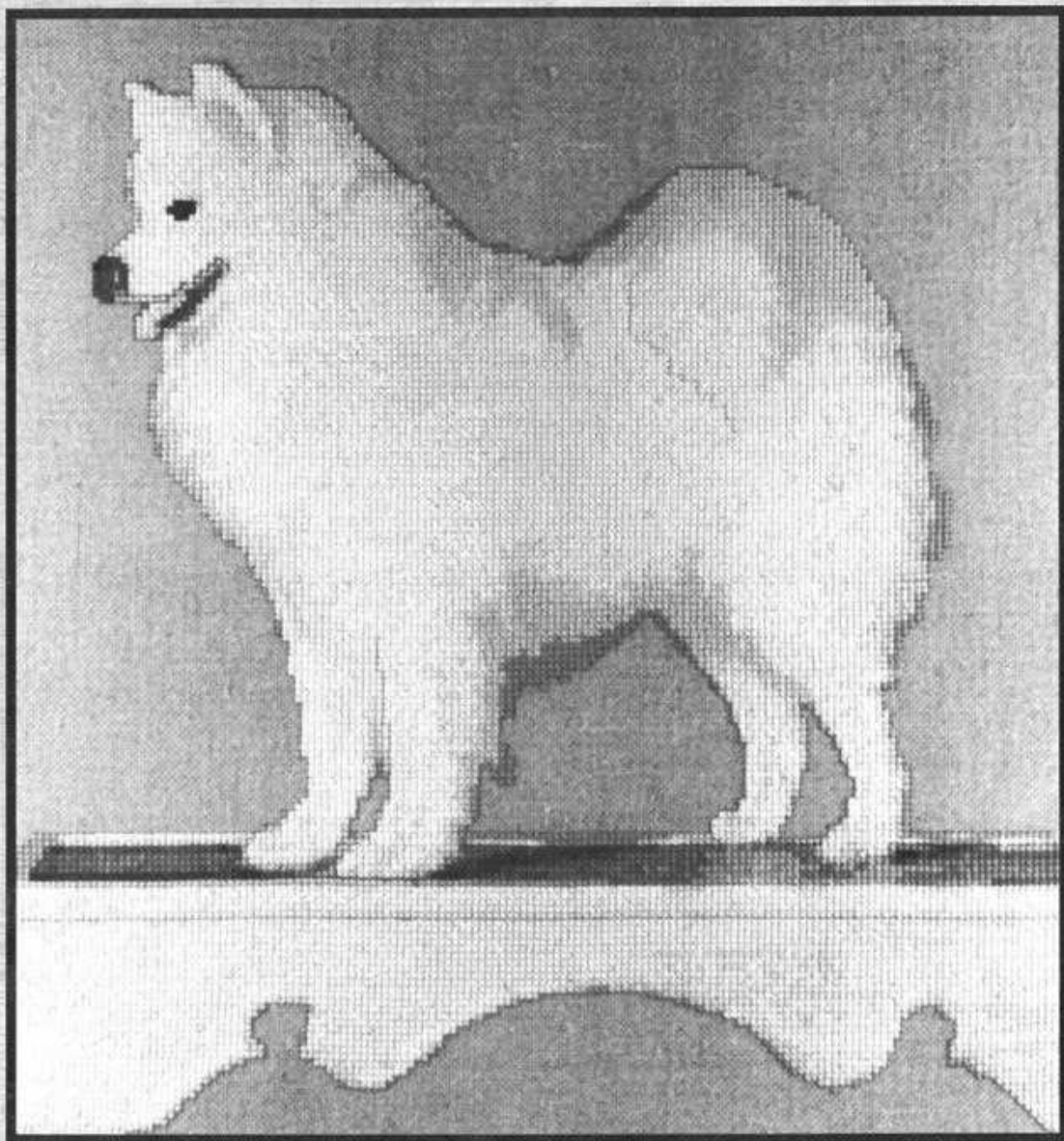
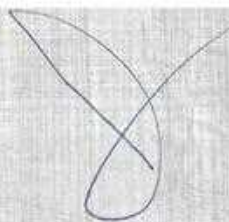


THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

Fall 2003 • \$13



Samoyed people

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Susan Hampton
RISUKO
Pagosa Springs, Colorado

This interview was conducted at the home of Susan Hampton in August 2002 by Lynne Robertson.

How long have you been in the breed, and how did you get started in dogs?

We have had Sammys for 32 years. We started with a little Spitz, who died of distemper before he was five months old. We decided we wanted to go with the "real thing." The Spitz was sold to us as a miniature Samoyed. We saw pictures of a Sammy, and that was what we wanted, but we had no clue where to find one. We looked in the phone book, and talked to a few kennels in town, but they didn't have any clue. This ad happened to be in the paper for miniature Samoyeds, and it turned out to be a Spitz. It had no pigment around the eyes; it was really an ugly thing, but we thought it was the most beautiful puppy we had ever seen. (laughter) After we lost that little Spitz, whose name was Kayah, we decided we wanted to get a purebred. We were trying to decide between a Keeshond, a Chow Chow, a Malamute, a Siberian and a Samoyed. We did find breeders of those dogs, and we went to interview the dogs.

We weren't really crazy about the temperaments until we met the Sammy. That was the last breed that we went to look at, and we just fell in love. We decided that was what we wanted, and we were willing to wait. The Sammy that we found, these people had just moved from California. They were getting a puppy back from a stud fee. We were going to get pick puppy of that litter, and we ended up taking a male.

We knew absolutely nothing about showing or anything. We had no clue that we were going to be doing that. We happened to be walking in a mall when this puppy was four months old, and they had a fun match going

on with the local kennel club. One of the ladies in the kennel club came up to us and asked if we were going to enter the fun match, and said we had a beautiful puppy. We said no, that we didn't know anything about that; we were just walking our dog. She said that she thought we could win, because it was such a beautiful puppy. The fun match was on the other side of the parking lot, and this puppy was barely lead-broken. We

point on.

Then we bought a bitch from a show kennel, and she turned out to be very ugly. She didn't have a temperament to show. We bred her to our champion, and we got a little female which we started showing. Her name was Ch. Ri-Su's Lit'l Bit O'Honey. We finished her in nine shows, too. We were very hooked by that time. We decided we wanted to go full blast. The first really good



Susan with Roxy (left) and Buckwheat (right).

had no idea how to bathe a dog, or show a dog, but we took this puppy in the show. We beat one other little Samoyed, and then we took first in Group. We were hooked!

We started showing that dog, but we had never even talked to anybody who had Sammys. We had no clue how to groom; we didn't even know that you are supposed to bathe and comb them. We had a slicker brush, and we just went over this dog. He finished in nine shows. His name was Ch. Sammie Kai Czar of Sabacca. We were addicted from that

show dog that we bought was from Doris McLaughlin of Silveracres Kennel. We got a beautiful little female, and it went on from there.

How many litters have you bred?

I have no idea! (laughter) I would have to go through the records. It has been ten years since we have bred for show purposes. The only time we did a breeding is when I needed another show dog, or if I had lost a dog. We didn't do a lot of breeding. Being very active for 26 years, we probably had twelve or thirteen litters.

Can you remember which was

your best litter?

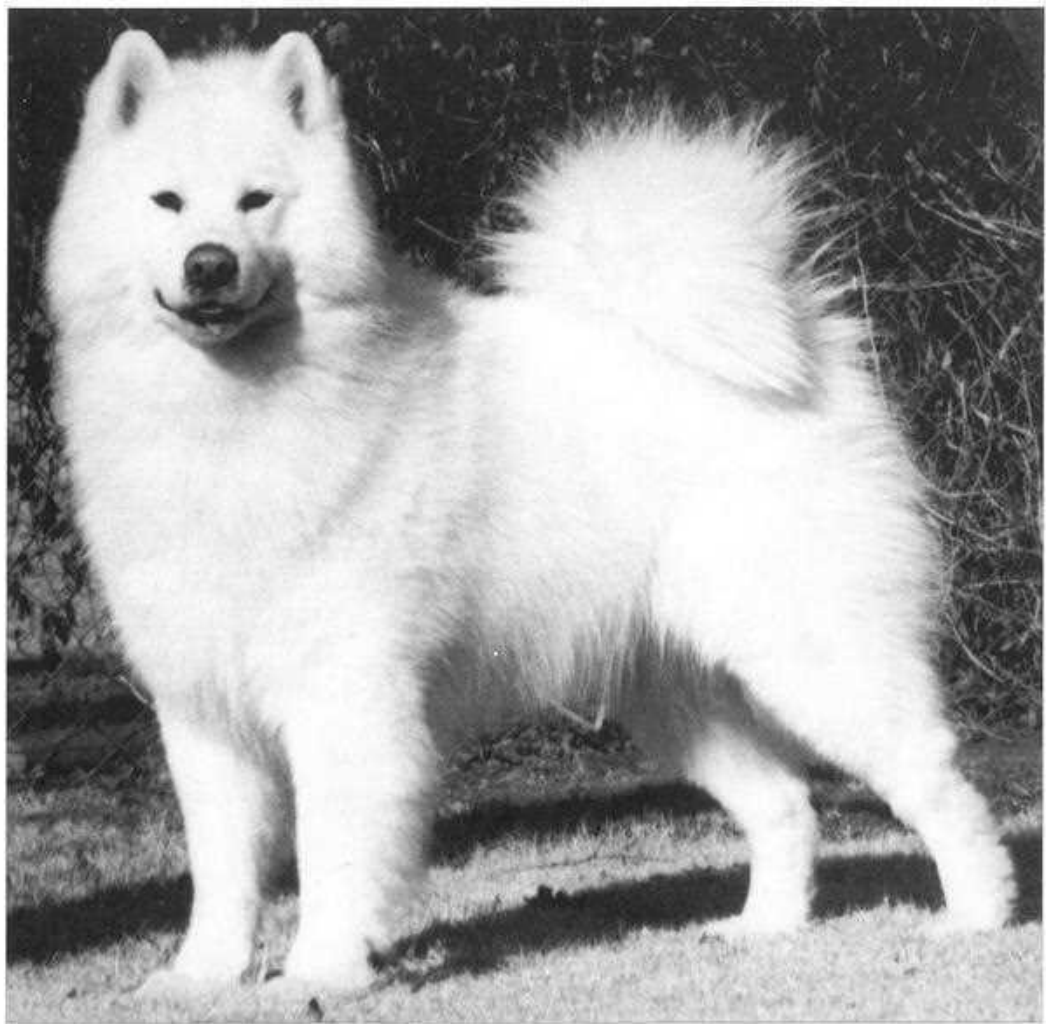
We had several exceptional litters. But, the most consistent litter was out of Taboo and Sabre. Late in the game, as we were getting ready to stop showing, I had a wonderful female named Risuko's Taboo. I took her to one show when she was six months old, and she was just a shy little puppy. She was really cute and spunky, but the first show I took her to, she was attacked by two Rottweilers. One grabbed her tail, and the other grabbed her front leg, and they just started chewing on her. We were on our way to the ring, and we went in the ring anyway, and we won that show. But she went in shaking. The judge saw the whole thing happen, so I don't know if he felt sorry for her or what. She was a beautiful little puppy, and she won that day. She won the next day, too. But after that we couldn't take her to any more shows, because every time she saw large black dogs, she would absolutely freak out. She ended up being a beautiful, very athletic dog. She never got her championship, though.

We bred her to a dog that we bought from Sanorka, Ch. Sanorka's Silver Sabre O'Risuko, which was a smaller male. He was 21 1/2 inches tall. Taboo was 22 1/2 inches tall, and everybody told me that I was crazy breeding these two. They said I was going to have little bitty males and huge females! They all said it wasn't going to work; that you just don't do that. But from the time I had her, I had a picture of a male in my mind that I wanted to breed her to.

Janice Hovelman had just used our stud dog at that time. Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight, who was a multi-Best in Show winner, and had got some lovely puppies out of that. She was telling me about a litter that she had which was eight weeks old at the time. She had kept a male out of that. As a matter of fact, I think the whole litter was all males. She had kept one male out of that for herself, and she was talking to me about him and how cute he was. It went back

to the Kondako line, which was in our lines. That was the line that I wanted to go back to for Taboo, to get that cute little bear head, and the smaller ears. Taboo had bigger ears, she was very tall, and she had a really big chest. Beautiful movement and a long neck; she was an athletic dog, but she needed more "pretty's." So she was talking to me about this puppy, not wanting to sell this dog, but she told me about the pedigree and I told her it was just what I wanted. I asked if she would be willing to sell him, and she said she wanted to talk to her husband about it. She called back the next day and said yes, they would sell him. At the time he was twelve weeks old when I got him.

His name was Sabre, Sanorka's Silver Sabre O'Risuko. He finished his championship, and was very cute. He was a clean mover, and he had lovely, beautiful pigment, dark eyes, and small ears. He had all the things that I had pictured in my mind to breed to Taboo. At the time I couldn't find another stud dog that I wanted to use with this bitch. So we did this breeding, and we got seven puppies; five girls and two boys. They were absolutely beautiful, and it was exactly what I had thought we would get. They were so good, I couldn't believe it. I thought since we had got a dog from a different kennel, I wasn't really seeing what I thought I was seeing. So I sold many of those as pets. I co-owned one of the males, which ended up being a top stud dog and a very good



Our first Samoyed - Ch. Sammie Kai Czar of Sabacca.

dog in the show ring. That was Ch. Risuko's Joi of Snowonder, who we co-owned with Fred Breckbuhl. "Zoomie" was a

lovely dog, just a beautiful dog. After seeing Zoomie in the ring, we had requests for more puppies out of that breeding.

We kept a female who ended up dying at a year old. We took her in to have her hips x-rayed, but she died of an overdose of anesthetic. We wanted to do a repeat breeding so we could have a female too, so we did that. Several of those puppies went to show homes, and they all finished. It was a lovely breeding. A lot of those dogs were the foundations of kennels. Four of the puppies, in fact, of those litters went on to be foundations of kennels and specialty winners.

The one that I kept, Ch. Risuko's Silver N' Lace, was a specialty winner. Two of her litterbrothers were specialty winners; one took a Reserve at the National, and finished at the Minnesota specialty with Winners Dog. His litterbrother took

Reserve Winners at the Minnesota specialty. It was a lovely breeding, and I had people calling me from all over the country saying, "I can't believe you got these puppies out of that huge bitch and that little male! They are wonderful!" That was really the last breeding that we have done, other than this recent one when we lost Lacey. I had to have another female, but we ended up getting three males. So I have a male right now; out of that litter, I intentionally kept the worst male. I didn't want to be tempted to go back out in the ring. I named him what my fellow breeders say is the most horrible name; his name is Risuko's Cream Of Wheat, and we call him "Buckwheat." (laughter) He turned out to be gorgeous. I had a breeder call me about him, and want to use him, but as soon as he heard his name he said he couldn't have "that" in his pedigree. It is an



Litter from breeding of Ch. Sanorka's Silver Sabre O'Risuko to Risuko's Sweetest Taboo.



Ch. Risuko's Dancing Demon.

awful name.

That is okay with me, because I really don't want another stud dog. I may go into the show ring, just because I think he is a lovely dog and he would be a lot of fun to show. He is very much a character. He is one of those males that keeps you on your toes. When he was a little baby we nicknamed him "Piranha" because he had his teeth on everything. Wherever you had this puppy - my son would take him into bed with him starting at two weeks of age, this little tiny baby, and he was just constantly chewing his cheeks. I kept telling Thomas not to let him do that, because he would want to chew on things when he was older. Sure enough, I have dining room chairs in there with teeth marks all over them. I have never had a dog before that destroyed furniture. He would lay there and chew away. Right now he is chewing on his mother, "Roxy." He is very particular where he chews on her; he likes to grab her by the base of the tail, where she can almost get to him but not quite. He doesn't grab her by the end of the tail. He has got her; she is over there getting mad and trying to grab him. She whips around trying to bite him back, but she can't get to him. That is his big game.

What is the best dog you have owned or bred?

Probably Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight. I did not name

that dog! That breeding was a half-brother to half-sister. I did not want to do that breeding,

because I just was very cautious about breeding too close. That was my husband's idea; he said it would be a wonderful breeding. The sire was Ch. Risuko's Big Guy O'Whitecliff, and the dam was Ch. Risuko's Shady Lady. My husband kept saying those dogs would complement each other so beautifully. He said, "Just let me be in charge; I will do this breeding. If it doesn't work, it will be my fault." He finally talked me into it, and I was still not convinced even when I had these puppies in front of me, that they were good enough for me to keep.

We had a couple in Oklahoma who wanted a show dog, and they said they would finish him. The main thing they wanted was a beautiful head. They loved our type and our heads, and they wanted a male that looked like "Big Guy." They wanted a beautiful head, pigment, eyes, and a white coat. I had a puppy in that litter who

was absolutely gorgeous, and that was what they wanted. So we sold them this dog. I would hear from her every once in a while about how beautiful this dog was, and I would just say, "Yeah, yeah." When that dog was seven months old, she called me on the phone crying; she was going through a divorce, and her husband wanted to take the dog. She did not want him to have the dog; she asked me to take the dog back. She wanted me to take him and finish him. I said yes, I would take him back, but as to whether or not I would show him, I couldn't say. I told her if he was good enough, I would show him, and if he wasn't, I would place him in a pet home. She told me "Nicki" was a "Best in Show dog." At that point we had never had a Best in Show dog, and I thought, "Yeah, right!"

We went to the Oklahoma show, but I didn't see her until



Result of first breeding out of Ch. Sammie Kai Czar of Sabacca and Ch. Ri-Su's Lit'l Bit O Honey.



Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight.



Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight taking BOB at eleven months, along with litter-sister Ch. Risuko's Lit'l Bit O' Triskit taking BOS.

the last day. We had fun, I was coming out the ring with ribbons in my hand. I had two dogs in one hand, and another person outside holding a male that I was showing. This woman who had Nicky ran up to me crying, and put this leash in my hand. Now I had three dogs. She said he was wonderful and she hoped I would do well with him, and then she walked off. Here I had three dogs, and people coming up to me congratulating me because we had just won. I was trying to look at Nicky, but I couldn't really see anything because I had two other dogs with me and ribbons. We went back to the van, I loaded everybody up, and I put Nicky in the crate. We went home, and on the way home, we stopped at a rest stop to walk the dogs. My husband said that Nicky was beautiful, and asked if I had looked at him. I said, "Not really; I didn't get a chance." He told me to look at the dog, and he took him up and down the sidewalk. I saw that he was beautiful and

really moved nice, too. I started getting really excited; I thought it was like a Cinderella story. I sold this beautiful puppy who I thought was kind of mediocre in structure, but he turned out to be outstanding.

We got home, and as I was coming in the house, the phone was ringing. One of the competitors who was at the show, a Sammy breeder, was asking if I wanted to sell Nicky. I told her I had no idea because it was an emergency situation when I took the dog back. I told her I would stay with the dog to get to know him for a while, to see what he was like, and I would call her back. I told her I might sell him and I might not; I hadn't decided yet. That was in the evening; the next morning, we went out in the yard and started looking at this dog, and watching him in the yard. My husband said we needed to keep this dog. This was the breeding that was his idea; he said the dog was great! And this was the best breeding we had ever done. He had said we needed to keep one, but of

course, I didn't, and then I had the dog that came back to me, so it was like it was meant to be. I called the woman back and told her no, we had decided to keep him. She wanted us to call her back if we ever changed our minds. She had the top-winning dog in the country at that time, so I thought if she liked Nicky, he must be a nice dog. I went in the house and started filling out show entries.

We went to Nebraska, to major shows, and he was seven and a half months old at the time. He won Winners Dog and Best of Winners at both shows! He had his majors right off the bat. He finished really quickly. I was pregnant at the time with our youngest child, Thomas, and at that point I thought, "This is it. Once I finish Nicky, that is going to be it and I am going to stop showing. I am just going to stay home to raise this baby." I planned to keep dogs as pets, and the show business would be over. We finished Nicky, and I had his litter-sister. We got to the place

where we were lacking a major for her, and I had a breeder in Wisconsin who wanted to buy her. So we sold that dog, because I wanted to downsize. We were just going to keep pets, and Nicky was going to be one of my pets. She took the litter-sister and finished her right away, and then we just kind of laid back for two years. We didn't go to any shows.

One day a friend called me and said I HAD to get back in the show ring. She said we needed to go to the Milwaukee specialty. I told her I hadn't been in the show ring for two years, and I didn't have anything to show. She said to take Nicky as a special. I hadn't worked with him, but she wanted me to go. I had one day to decide before the entries closed. She said I would take Best in Specialty, and she was going to take Winners Dog. She had just bought a new dog at the time who was really turning out well. I said okay, and I talked to my husband about it, and he said to go ahead. I entered Nicky, and

In Loving Memory

Ch. Risuko's Joi of Sno Wonder "Zoomee"

October 20, 1989 to July 13, 2003

A Bridge Called Love

*It takes us back to brighter years,
to happier sunlit days
and to precious moments
that will be with us always.
And these fond recollections
are treasured in the heart
to bring us always close to those
from whom we had to part.*

*There is a bridge of memories
from earth to Heaven above...
It keeps our dear ones near us
It's the bridge that we call love.*

~ Author Unknown

It is with immeasurable sadness that we announce the passing of our wonderful *Zoomee*. While our hearts are so heavy without him and our home is now so quiet, our grief is lightened somewhat when we remember the love we shared with this exceptional, once-in-a-lifetime boy, and that he lives on through his children and grand-children.

We wish to thank all of our dear friends for their kind expressions of sympathy as we begin the long healing process.

Special thanks to our friends and breeders Susan and Richard Hampton for sharing *Zoomee* with us.

SnoWonder Samoyeds

Fred & Kay Brechbuhl

15925 South 4240 Road

Claremore, OK 74017

Phone: 918•341.7315

E-mail: snowonder@gbonline.com



she entered her dog, and we went to the Milwaukee specialty. Well, she won Winners Dog and I won Best in Specialty! (laughter) She said, "I told you so! You need to get back with the program!"

I thought I was done with it, but here she was getting me all excited about dog shows again.



Ch. Risuko's Ms. Molly O' Whitediff.

At that show, we had multitudes of breeders who hadn't seen Nicky, who were really impressed with him and wanted to use him as a stud dog. It had just happened that right before we went up there, I had him x-rayed, and his hips came out "excellent." We went to the ophthalmologist and had his eyes checked, and everything was perfect. Again, it was like it was meant to be. From that show, we drove back with a bitch in season to breed to him. That started his breeding career, and I am not sure how many champions he had. I think it was around 23, though we only used him for a couple of years. The stud dog part of it was really hard on us; I was trying to work a full-time job. I was picking up females from the airport, and taking care of them, and having everything disrupted in our kennel with the other dogs; it was really hard. We just decided we didn't want to do too much of that, so we were trying to be

very selective on what bitches we would take.

After that Best in Specialty win, a friend talked me into entering him into more dog shows. It was getting toward the end of the season, so I decided I was just going to go out for about three more weekends. I entered three weekends all at

once. We got back to Wichita, and three weeks later at the next show we went to, he completely blew his coat. Then he decided he didn't want to show! So out of three shows, I think we took one Best of Breed. The following weekend, we went to another show, and he was acting like a real turkey. Here Nicky was, totally naked, and he had discovered girls by then. There was a bitch in season, and all he wanted to do was have his nose in the air constantly. We went in the ring and all he was doing was looking for bitches. He was showing terribly. I had to string him up like a Pointer, holding his collar up and his tail up. He would stay when I told him to, but he was still acting like a real jerk. It wasn't like he was showing like Sammys are supposed to, real animated.

We didn't do anything the first day, and the second day, Nicky took Best of Breed. He showed terribly; I was embarrassed to go in the Group ring,

so I went back to our motel room not intending to go back to the Group ring. A friend of mine who was rooming with me kept trying to get me to go back to the Group ring. She took Nicky and took me by the arm and said, "You are going out there!" She put me in the van and told me to go out there and present the dog and do the best I could. She said I was NOT going to weenie out on taking that dog in the ring! She told me to act like a handler and do whatever I had to do. So we went back into the show area, and the Group ring was already in progress. They had already gone around the ring one time. I went up to the gate to get permission to go in the ring. The judge motioned for us to come in the ring, so here we are, running around this huge ring all by ourselves. From the back of the line, she put me up front. I was going, "Huh?" (laughter)

I was standing there, and as she was coming up to the dog for the examination, I had to set him up and string him up like a Pointer. I did what my friend had told me, just act like a handler. I strung him up and stood there to present him to the judge. We took first in Group. Everybody was going crazy, because they knew the story. She said, "See, I told you so! Now you are going in the Best in Show ring!" That was what I had to do; act like a handler. The dog was acting like a jerk, but he looked gorgeous and he had his ears up. We went in the ring, and I had never been in the Best in Show ring before. Here were all the top dogs in the country, with professional handlers, and then me with this corny dog that didn't know - well, he knew exactly what he was doing. He was still looking for bitches! We went in the ring, and the judge immediately put us up front. We took Best in Show! I kept remembering my friend Karen, calling me up saying I needed to get back with the program. Again, apparently this was meant to be!

Thinking back on my husband saying we needed to do that breeding, because it was going to be the best breeding, and I kept saying no, no. All along, everybody kept pushing me, saying this was great and I was supposed to do this. I was the only one who was not con-

vinced. I still get emotional about it. We went the following weekend, and here was this dog, out of coat, who took his first Best in Show and Best in Specialty, and the second weekend out, he took another Best in Show! It was kind of unbelievable. I feel like all things happen for a reason. We were in a totally different situation. At that time there were a lot of top dogs in the country that were going to the same shows, so we were competing against the top dogs every weekend. All of the sudden, I was looked upon as a competitor. Here I was, a hobby breeder owner/handler, but they were doing it for a livelihood. They were there to make money out of this. When they get wins out of the Group ring, or especially the Best in Show ring, they get bonuses. That is how they make their money.

We went to just a few more shows after that weekend, after we took our second Best in Show. We did take some more Group placements, but it was a totally different ball game. Up to that point, the only reason I went was for fun. It was totally for relaxing, getting together with friends, and for fun. All of the sudden, it got very serious. These handlers were actually trying to do things to me and my dog to upset Nicky when he was in the Group ring. They would try to get him to lunge at their dogs, they would have their dogs lunge at my dog trying to upset him in some way. Or when the judge was coming up to my dog to be examined, behind the judge's back they would throw a piece of bait trying to divert my dog's attention. It was really interesting, because Nicky really bonded to me, and when they would do that to him, it was like he knew what they were doing. He would show that much better!

There was a point where he didn't like showing, so after his second Best in Show, I took him out in the parking lot and put him on a table. I got in his face and told him to look at me. He kept turning his eyeballs away from me, and I made him look at me. I told him he was winning regardless of whether he was having fun or not. I told him I was having fun, but I would have a lot more fun if he were having a good time too,



*h. Risuko's Shady Lady (Ch. Kondako's Dancing Bear x Ch. Ri-Su's Ms. Molly O'Whitecliff),
dam of BIS Ch. Risuko's Mister Moonlight.*

and we went in there as a team instead of me having to string him up like a Pointer. I told him he was not a Pointer, he was a Samoyed, and he was supposed to do it on his own. I kept taking his face and making him look at me. Finally he started looking at me, and it was like he was really listening to what I was saying. I shook his cheeks as I was talking to him, and I said, "You listen to me, because I am dragging you in the ring and I will continue to string you up! You have a choice: you can either have fun, or you can be a jerk. It is your choice." I took him down off the table and put him in the crate. We had one more show that weekend.

He had acted like a jerk up until that point, when we had our little talk. The next day, it was like the "on" switch went on. He showed like a million dollars! We started to have a little following of people from other breeds, people who I didn't know but who really liked Nicky because he was such a beautiful dog. He was lovely to watch. After he started showing, we came out of the ring, and they were asking me what had happened to the dog. He was acting like he really liked it then. I told him we just had a little talk! (laughter) From that point on, he showed. As a matter of fact, we had a female from California that met us at the show grounds. We did a breeding after the show, and I thought he would never show after that. He went in the next day, and he knew that showing was for showing. He knew that you never did breedings in the show ring, but maybe in the parking lot afterwards! He continued to look for bitches out in the parking lot, but he never did that in the ring again. He was a serious show dog from that point on.

It continued to get worse with the other handlers, as far as making me feel like I really had to protect my dog. I could not leave my dog alone; at that point there were a lot of strange things going on. Dogs were being poisoned, dogs were being shaved, their tail hair clipped or the sides of their faces shaved, just so they couldn't compete. I felt like either I had to be with this dog every second or I had to have somebody watch him. I could never go to the restroom

or anything. I couldn't leave this dog alone for a second, because by then he was a competitor. Even though it was a lot of fun, it was different; it started being scarier. I started fearing for Nicky's well-being and for my well-being. I didn't know what they were capable of. You were hearing all these stories about dogs being poisoned at shows all the time, and they were always the good ones, the competitors. It totally flipped. That was in 1985 and 1986; it totally changed my perception of dog showing. It was a good thing/bad thing.

What I was thinking at that



Mother and daughter, left: Ch. Risuko's Fancy Free, "Fancy," and Ch. Risuko's Devil Woman, "Ruby."

time was getting in the Best in Show ring. It wasn't even going to the show; it was getting in the Best ring. At the same time, it got a lot more stressful. It was easygoing before, and then all of the sudden, I had to be different. There was a little bit of fear going on and a little bit of paranoia. It was a whole different ball game; I had heard that before, but I never knew what they were talking about until I experienced it. That whole experience raised me to a different level as far as my personal

life. It made me realize some things that I had kind of taken for granted before were a lot more serious. It made me more aware and not so naive about a lot of things about life in general, with my work and with clients. I have to say that I think there was a definite reason for going through that experience, even though it seemed like I had to be pushed into it by my family and my friends. I kept saying no, it is time to quit, but everybody around me kept pushing me. They kept saying if they could only get a dog that good, they would love to get a Best in Show.

Who or what has influenced your breeding the most?

Originally, it was Doris McLaughlin of Silveracres kennels, and Connie and Dave Richardson with Kondako. That was in the very beginning; probably about six or seven years into having Samoyeds. They were influencing me, but after that a lot of it came from going back and reading the standard. You can see different cycles as you go through different decades of what was popular in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s.

It always upset me to have these trends going on. I would always get the standard back out, and read it. I could say, "No, that is not correct," if it was not. So my guideline was actually the standard. I never, ever tried to breed anything extreme. I never tried to go just for beauty. As a matter of fact, the very first thing was always temperament. If there was a dog that was ever questionable in temperament, that was totally out of the breeding program. That was always number one.

Then, it was just the best all-around dog. I would not breed anything that I didn't want to repeat. In other words, a dog that wasn't good enough to have been duplicated in its offspring, I wouldn't want to use for breeding. Whenever I did a breeding, I would always look at the bitch, and try to be very honest as to what she was lacking. I had to decide what stud dog I would use to compensate for that, without losing what I already had. Sometimes we did linebreeding, and sometimes we did outcrosses, but what we really focused on was not always the genetics. Also the phenotype; the overall type of the dog. I wanted it to be similar to what I already had, even though it may have been an outcross. Maybe it had a stronger front, or a stronger rear, or something that I didn't have that I wanted to complement. I would say 90 percent of our breedings were successful, because I got what I had planned. Some people say that when you put the idea out and you know exactly what you want, it kind of channels the energy into that. I think it is true, but a lot of it is just common sense. Going back and reading the standard, being honest with yourself, and when you know you have a weak area, trying to improve that.

I have had so many people come to me, particularly when I had a Best in Show dog, and want to use that dog, Nicky, just because he was a Best in Show dog. He was popular, and yes, he was beautiful, but he didn't necessarily complement every bitch. I would always try to steer people the right way; I was never trying to get multitudes of numbers to breed to Nicky. I would always question these people; what is it that you want to improve? I would be honest

with them, and tell them if Nicky was not going to give them what they wanted. Or I would tell them if he could do this or that, if he was dominant in that. There is no stud dog that is good for all bitches; you have to be very particular in examining your bitch. If she is not good enough that you would want another one like her, then she is not breeding material.

How many dogs do you keep now, and what is the most you have ever kept?

Right now we just have two. I consider them my pets, although they are both show quality. They can both be finished. Roxy has eight points. Buckwheat has only been in the ring once, and that was when Roxy was in full season. He did go to major shows at that point, and did take a Reserve Winner Dog, but he was absolutely out of his mind. It wasn't a fair exhibition; it was very embarrassing, as a matter of fact. After not being in the ring for so long, and then having this dog leaping and howling, going in circles, and still taking Reserve Winners for a five-point major.

Anyway, I can't say never, but I would like to keep the numbers down from now on to two. I can't imagine my life without a Sammy, but two is more fun because they really enjoy each other's company. It doubles the pleasure and the fun. Right now, they are strictly for fun. They go backpacking with us, hiking, biking, they do everything with us. A lot of times they go to a job site with us. Our dogs are so used to new construction right now that they love going into houses that are being framed. They go into every nook and cranny, and it is like they are examining the structure to make sure it is done right. (laughter)

We have had up to eight adult dogs at one time. We went through a period where for some reason, this was a long time ago - probably 25 years ago, we were trying to breed a litter with a Silveracres bitch. We would get no puppies, or we would get one puppy. We had two bitches at the time, and we wanted to have a litter, so we

bred both bitches. Well, of course, you know what happens: one had eight, and the other had six. All of the sudden we had fourteen puppies! We learned real quick to never, ever do that again. Fourteen puppies was just a horrendous situation. All you are doing is cleaning up messes, and you can't really give the time to each individual to socialize them. It is almost impossible! It was a horrible experience.

When we were really active in breeding and showing, we

everyday life. They do things with you all the time. You can't get that when you have a kennel full of dogs, and everybody is in a kennel barking. They are kind of a nuisance because they are always digging holes, barking, and being obnoxious. A lot of people will debark their Sammys but the truth is, they are really not barkers. They bark when they are trying to tell you something. When they are upset, they don't have water, they are hungry, maybe there is a squirrel outside that they want

go to their houses for dinner, they will put their dogs away. I rarely ever put my dogs away unless somebody just cannot be around dogs, for allergic reasons or asthma or something. They like to lay on your feet, on visitors' feet as well. They just want to be a part of you. They are so connected.

They are so intelligent; I truly believe they can understand probably as much as a four-year-old child understands. They can understand a lot of the human language. They do understand when you talk simple language to them. I talk to my dogs like they are children, and they are very obedient and obliging. They want to please, but you will never experience that if you have too many. You will never get them to develop their full potential and intelligence, and their wonderful personalities, if you don't develop that relationship with them. I have had people come over to my house who absolutely hate dogs, have never had a dog, never wanted a dog, and they leave my house asking if I would sell them a dog. These are true diplomats; they are the most wonderful dogs to be with. We love camping with them because if they get wet and can't come in the tent, they sleep right outside the door. They are in their element; they get to guard their masters. They love doing that! We had a bear come around to our campsite, and they were so proud of themselves, chasing this bear off. They just felt like they had a real purpose.



*Ch. Risuko's Fancy Free
(Ch. Kondaka's Dancing Bear x Ch. Ri-Su's Ms. Molly O'Whitecliff).*

usually had four dogs. They were all finished. Four was good, because we would have two in the house and two outside. A lot of times there were four in the house, though. But it was nice when we had four, because it could be two and two. When you have three, it has to be three in or three out. You can never leave one on its own. (laughter) Since we downsized we just have two; until we lost Lacey we had three for awhile. Three was fine, but it just reaffirms to me how special this breed is. You develop this bond where they are part of your

to chase and they can't get to it, or whatever. That isn't part of the breed, to be a barking, nuisance dog. They do that out of sheer boredom.

These dogs were meant to be companions, and when they are companions, you can leave them in the house all day, and they will not touch anything. They are the best, most trustworthy dogs. You don't get that one-on-one relationship with them unless they are part of your household all the time. That is where they want to be. They want to be laying on your feet. A lot of people, when you

To be continued ...

