

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
T.J. and Nelda Dendinger
SILVERTIPS OF DIXIE
Killian, Louisiana

This interview was conducted at the home of T.J. and Nelda Dendinger in June of 1995 by Brenda Abbott.

How did you get started in Samoyeds?

Nelda: When I was about twelve or thirteen years old, my neighbor had a big, furry white dog called King that I loved. I did not know at the time that he was a Samoyed. Many years later, T.J. and I purchased a German Shepherd puppy. T.J. decided he wanted to show the German Shepherd, and when he exhibited the Shepherd, I decided I would like to show also. I could not handle a big German Shepherd nor run as fast as the Shepherds are required to go. We later saw Sammy puppies in the veterinarian's office and I recognized the furry, white dog that I had loved as a child. We went in search of a Sammy. We ended up at Kathryn and Micky Tagliaferri's. They owned Ch. Chu San's Mei Ling O' Yenesisk, the 1964 SCA top-winning bitch. They had a litter of puppies by Mei Ling and we purchased a ten-month-old bitch we called "Cookie." Her name was Ka-Tag's Desire In Silver. I tried to show Cookie, but with very little success. She did not have the ideal temperament, we later learned. We went back to the Tagliaferri's when they had a second litter out of Mei Ling, sired by Ch. Silver Duke of the Rockies. We purchased a male puppy, which T.J. handled, and I co-owned a puppy bitch named "Memory," Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver, who finished her championship at ten months of age, with a Group First in Albany, Georgia. She went on to become the SCA Top Winning Bitch in 1967.

T.J.: The way I shifted from Shepherds to Samoyeds was at Memory's first show — as a matter of fact, even at her first sanc-

tioned match. She was not the greatest dog to handle because she was very playful at that age. At the sanctioned match, Nelda was supposed to show her, but decided she didn't want any part of her. Then Micky Tagliaferri planned to show her, but he had left to get coffee. When it came time to get the dog into the ring, I was the only one available. Consequently, I got the task of showing Memory at her first match. As nearly as I can remember, I went second.

The same thing happened at her first show, the last show of the Deep South Circuit in New Orleans at the municipal audito-

didn't seem like he was too thrilled about showing her, either. I took her out of her crate, brought her into the show building and sat down in a chair with her. I stayed there for about an hour and a half. Memory got to the point where the clapping wasn't bothering her too much anymore. Every now and then I'd take her to an area where it wasn't too crowded and I'd move her back and forth. I got her moving freely and I felt like she was settling down. I showed her that day, winning a three-point major when she was one day over six months. She kind of won my heart and,

from that day on, I started getting heavier into Samoyeds. As it went, I finally got totally out of Shepherds and we went totally with Samoyeds.

What year did you get Memory?

Nelda: Memory was whelped April 29, 1966, and we brought her home at nine weeks of age. She lived with us, she was our house pet and she became a joy to show after she settled into the routine. She had a wonderful disposition. When she had puppies, she could detect a person who didn't deserve one of her puppies. When prospective buyers came in to look at her puppies, she would actually growl at some, or become indifferent and run away, not even wanting them to pet her. We soon learned that these people were not really dog lovers. They wanted a puppy that, later on, they could breed and make a lot of money selling this rare, to this area, breed of dog. So, we let her judge their character. We were fortunate. We were able to place the puppies from her first litter into excellent homes. We primarily sold them as pets, the people became good friends and would show their dogs, or allow us to show them. We finished three from that litter. We had to have a sire for her puppies. I'll let T.J.

tell you about "Taj."

T.J.: We decided that we wanted to breed heavily to Memory's mother's side of the line (Mei Ling). We were thinking seriously of breeding to Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene, but we hated to have to fly



Left to right: Theresa Dendinger with parents T.J. and Nelda Dendinger.

rium. The acoustics were bad and the spectators were clapping. When they clapped, it upset a lot of dogs, Memory included. After I got through showing my Shepherd that day, Nelda informed me that she didn't want to take Memory into the ring. Micky

Memory to Washington. Before Memory was ready to breed, Sandy and Lee Wacenske of Pinehill Kennels had taken back a dog she had sold. The couple had divorced and the dog was in a kennel. To make a long story short, Sandy got the dog back. His name was Count Togwotee of Pinehill. She sent us films of the dog and we really liked him. We purchased him as the founding stud dog of our kennel. At this time, Memory was already the SCA Top Winning Bitch in the United States, and a lot of people in the kennel club thought I was totally out of my mind breeding the Top Winning Bitch to a male that wasn't even pointed. I told them that unless I was a poor judge of dogs, Taj would be a champion before the puppies were born. After we bred him to Memory, we entered him in the Deep South Circuit and he won all seven shows.

Nelda: We had fun showing Taj. Sandy called him "Tog." When she spoke with her Yankee accent, we thought she was saying Taj, so before he arrived we had called him Taj for so long we could not change his call name. T.J. would take Taj into the ring and the judge would look at him, gait him, pat him on the head, smile, set him aside and never look at him again. At first we thought, "This dog is out of the ribbons. What is wrong with the judge?" Every judge would go through the classes and come back and just point him number one. We finally got accustomed to it.

Of course, when the puppies arrived, we started training them at an early age. They all had wonderful dispositions, which was very important to us. Whether for show or pet, the number one priority for us was good temperament, because we wanted a dog that was, first of all, a companion, so we spent a lot of time socializing the puppies. They were whelped in the corner of a room in our home and received a lot of attention. We had three young children, and our house has always been like Grand Central Station. With so many people in and out, socialization was no problem. As soon as the puppies were old enough, we would set up a little show ring in our yard. The Tagliaferri and all the show people in Baton Rouge would come over for classes. By the time we got to the shows, the dogs were completely accustomed to the show ring and to strangers. It became a joy to go to the sanctioned matches and the shows throughout the Southern states, making friends with other breeders and sharing ideas.

T.J.: Our first home-bred champion was "Fancy."

Nelda: Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fantasy.

T.J.: She was probably my favorite. Nelda never liked to special the bitches. We finished Fancy quickly. She came into a beautiful coat as she matured and I talked Nelda into bringing her out and specialing



Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver (Ch. Silver Duke of the Rockies x Ch. Chu San's Mei Ling O' Yene-seisk). Group winner, dam of nine American and two Canadian champions. SCA Top Winning Bitch in 1967. Pictured with judge Vincent Perry awarding Group Second, handled by owner T.J. Dendinger.

her. We worked her at an all breed training class of the Baton Rouge Kennel Club. There must have been three rings set with fifteen dogs in each ring. I worked Fancy off-lead, with Shepherds and other breeds in the training ring. I worked her in a circle and down and back off-lead. She performed to perfection. We were ready. We entered some shows. After the training class, the girls wanted her to sleep in their bedroom. Fancy was dead the next morning. She had gotten hold of a balloon. I could see where she had thrown up and part of that balloon was in it. So, I didn't get to special her, which I still regret.

Who else was in that litter?

Nelda: Ch. Silvertip Nikki of Summer

Sun. He finished with four majors, but was never specialied. Ch. Silvertip Memory's Echo, another bitch. We called her "Scarlet." She competed in this area for a while. Julie and John Billig co-owned her at the time and later moved back to Arizona where Scarlet finished in either Arizona or southern California with a five-point major. Julie bred her to Ch. Mr. Williaw and had some nice puppies, but I don't believe she showed any of those puppies. She later divorced and moved on to other things. Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fantasy, however, produced some lovely puppies. We bred her to Ch. Czar's Dorak of Whitecliff and sent one of those puppies to Mary Frederick's Kendara Kennels in Illinois. She became Ch. Kendara's

O'T Katch' R Silvertip and went on to produce lovely puppies herself. Her puppies were scattered throughout the kennels in the Illinois and Pennsylvania areas.

Fancy also produced Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Countess, "Tess," who, in turn, produced well. From Fancy's same litter there was another nice bitch, Silvertip's Song Of Praise. We sold her to a young couple in the military. They moved to California and did a linebreeding which produced a Best in Show winner, Ch. Caliph's Lucky Prince. There are many descendants from him in California which have done well. We later bred Fancy's daughter Tess to Ch. El Sol's Lucky Prynne, "Teddy," bred by Nancy Foster and owned by Marion Langlois of Baton Rouge.

We kept Fancy's granddaughter, Silvertip's Dixie Tradition. She was a large, free-moving bitch. She showed beautifully as a puppy. I had shown her in Texas and gone Best of Breed over several fine specials. I showed her in Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. She usually went Best of Winners; however, we were never able to finish her. She developed parvo virus and after the parvo virus her temperament was never the same. She got to where she wouldn't go into the show ring. She was attacked by a terrier as she entered the show ring one time and after that and the parvo virus, you literally had to drag her into the ring.

T.J.: I finished Tess, Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Countess, at Lake Charles, Louisiana. We had replaced a puppy to Gail and Richard Maxfield in New Orleans. We gave them "Puddin," Ch. Silvertip's Snowfield, a puppy that we really wanted to keep. They showed her in the Puppy class the same day that I finished Tess. She was a better bitch than Tess, but she went out of the ribbons in a class of five puppies. Gail came out of the ring, asking what happened. I said, "My goodness, that's the worst job of handling that I have ever seen in my life." She asked, "Do you think you could do any better?" I said, "I'm positive I can." She said, "Well, would you show her tomorrow?" I said, "I'd be delighted to show her tomorrow, but get this bitch to me at 8:00 in the morning, because she's not going to do in the ring with me what she did with you today." I guess a lot of people think I'm kind of a smart aleck.

I took the bitch into the building that morning very early. I stayed there quite a while, got her adjusted, brought her back and Nelda groomed her. I brought her into the building again, and when I came back I told Richard, "I'll bet you \$50 to \$1 that Puddin takes the major today." She would have to go Best of Winners to take the major. Sure enough, she took the five-point major. When I came out of the ring, I handed Gail the leash and said, "When you take this bitch back into the ring, act like you're proud of her, because she can win." They



Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill, "Taj" (Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene x Pinehill's Forget-Me-Not), pictured at his last show getting Best of Breed at seven years under judge Pat Gillen.

did go on and finish her quickly after that. They just lacked confidence. Gail told me when I came out, "I never knew my dog was that beautiful."

Nelda: We repeated the breeding of Ch. Ka-Tags Memory In Silver to Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill. From that second litter we sold two bitches and one male to show homes. The male was Ch. Silvertip's Nicolas O' Dixie. The bitches were Ch. Silvertip's Angel of Dixie and Silvertip's Yukon Princess, "Pookie." Pookie lacked one point in finishing, but unfortunately was hit by a car and killed.

From another litter, we sent "Poopsie,"

Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Sensation, to Wayne MacArthur in Waterville, Maine at about ten months of age. He wanted a bitch to show and later breed to a male he had purchased from Pinehill Kennel. Poopsie was one of my favorites. We took her to the airport with mixed emotions. Wayne fell in love with her when he got her off the plane. She was very typey and we felt that she would do well on the East Coast. He finished her in no time at all. I think she finished at the specialty going Best of Breed over specials. We kept her sister, "Sassy," Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fascination. After Wayne finished Poopsie, he called and want-

ed to know why we sent him the bitch we had sent him and kept the other one.

T.J.: I told him, "Wayne, the bitch that we sent you, if you were going to take a picture in the ring, she is going to be absolutely beautiful. She's got the coat, she's got the head. She's just beautiful. To show, she's the dog to win. If you wanted to hook one to a sled, that's the dog I kept. Sassy is the best moving dog. She's also nice, but she doesn't have the glamorous coat that Poopsie has." He said, "Well, I've got to have her. If you think Sassy is better than Poopsie, I've got to have her." I said, "She's not for sale." We let a lot of dogs go that we actually should have kept ourselves. We realized we couldn't give too many dogs the attention they deserved. After we talk to people like Wayne, and we know they're going to do the right thing - at least, we feel it - it's not as hard to make the decision to sell. We did get a lot of dogs into really nice homes and their owners did a lot with them. I said, "Wayne, I'm going to have to think about that. I really don't want to sell Sassy. I'm having fun showing her and we're going to finish her championship." He said, "Well, okay. You keep her, finish her championship and then send her to me and I'll finish her Canadian." I said, "I'll think about it." So, after it was all said and done, we finished her American championship and he finished her Canadian championship.

So you actually sold her to him?

T.J.: We co-owned her for a while and then we ended up selling him the whole dog.

Nelda: We bred two litters from Sassy, both sired by Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene. We bred one litter before we co-owned her with Wayne, and we had lovely puppies. We finished two bitches, Ch. Silvertip's Kara Snow and Ch. Silvertip's Snowfield. We repeated the litter because people were bugging us for puppies and we kept hoping we'd get a male we could special. However, we did not get that exceptional male. For some reason, we always got better bitches.

From that second litter we got Ch. Silvertip's Snow Mac Heritage, "Jenny," who was sold to Phoebe Faulmann and became one of her two foundation bitches. Through Jenny, Phoebe had put puppies into show homes throughout the United States. Jenny produced eight champions. Phoebe's first bitch was Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Heritage, dam of six champions. We decided to name her Heritage, and that became Phoebe's kennel name. We co-owned Jenny, Ch. Silvertip's Snow Mac Heritage, and the co-ownership was supposed to be an ongoing situation. Eventually, Phoebe talked us into selling her the dog outright. Ironically, when Phoebe first approached us about purchasing a bitch, we were hesitant about placing one with her because she was



Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fantasy, "Fancy" (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory in Silver), the Dendingers' first home-bred champion.



Ch. Silvertip Nikki Of Summer Sun (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver), Winners Dog and Best of Winners.

showing horses at that time and said she doubted she would ever breed the bitch! After meeting her, we reconsidered. What a loss to us and the Samoyed breed it would have been had we not!

We bred just when we wanted a puppy for ourselves to show and tried to limit our adult dogs to four. After a weekend of showing when we boarded Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill at a kennel and he escaped, we decided that we would never go off and board the dogs again. We could travel with three children and four dogs with no problem, so that was the magic number for us. T.J. did the handling and I did the grooming, but sometimes if he won with the male, I would take the bitch in.

We finished another male, Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Debonaire, at Mobile, Alabama with a five-point major and Best of Breed over five specials. We acquired "Effie Lee," Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Heritage, from Phoebe Faulmann. She had bred Ch. Silvertip's Snow-Mac Heritage to Ch. Silver Acres Mac Heritage. We fell in love with Effie Lee at five weeks of age when visiting with Phoebe. She insisted she would not consider parting with the puppy. Eight or nine months later, Phoebe called and wanted to know if we would still be interested in that particular puppy. T.J. said, "Yes, I'll be there tomorrow morning to pick her up." Effie Lee was just as gorgeous as we knew she would be.

We finished her in nothing flat and speialed her a little bit. I believe she and Ch. Quicksilver's RazzMaTazz finished on the same day and everywhere we speialed her she had to compete with Tazz at the height of his show career. One time she was fortunate enough to go Best of Breed over Tazz. We decided to retire her on the spot. We later bred her to Tazz and produced some very nice puppies. We sold them to homes throughout the United States. We kept one bitch and showed her. Her name was Silvertip's Tazzmanian Devil. She was really a joy to show. I think 1985 was the last time we showed her. She won many shows and had quite a few points. We then moved to the country and T.J. took over the family timber and land investment business. We didn't have time to go to shows so we never finished her.

How many champions have you bred?

T.J.: Around fifteen. More, I guess.

Nelda: We've bred a lot of nice dogs that we sold which had points and could easily have finished, but either their owners lost interest or we had too many dogs to show and just couldn't get them all in the ring.

T.J.: A lot of the dogs we sold we actually finished ourselves. We would handle the dogs for their owners. I finished Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Countess, Tess, for Joe Maxwell. We finished a bitch for the Ratuis in Tennessee. I showed a dog for Sandy and Lee Wacenske. I called Sandy about



Ch. Silvertip Memory's Echo, "Scarlet" (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver). Winners Bitch and Best of Opposite Sex under judge Maurice Baker.

breeding to the best conformation dog that she owned. She named a dog I had never heard about, Commander. I asked, "When did he finish?" She said, "He's not finished. He's never been shown." I asked her, "If he's that great, why don't you show him?" She said, "Well, he's a kook." I said, "I don't want to breed to a kook." I asked her to send the dog to me and I would handle the dog for her on the Deep South Circuit, but to send him in advance so I would have time to work with him. For handling him, I would breed to one of my bitches. Sandy replied that if Commander wouldn't show for Lee, no one could win with him. She said that she would have to think about it.

Two months passed and we received a judging schedule with Commander's entries. It was about four days before the Deep South Circuit started and we didn't have the dog and didn't even know if he was coming.

I called Sandy that very instant and asked her what in the world she was doing. She said she was getting ready to go to the airport to ship me a dog. She didn't give me much time to work with this kook of a dog that she was sending. Luckily, he came around fast, and we were able to win all seven shows. When we sent him back to Pinehill, he lacked one major of being a champion and Lee finished him with a five-point major at a specialty.

Nelda: That was Ch. Pinehills Commander, a beautiful, heavy-coated, very large, very nice moving dog.

T.J.: Sandy was right about his conformation. He had great conformation. People around here fell in love with him.

Whom did you breed him to?

Nelda: We bred him to Ch. Silvertip Memory's Echo, and it was a tragic situation. We co-owned her with a friend in

Alexandria, Louisiana and there were six puppies in the litter. We were supposed to get pick of the litter. The puppies were about five or six weeks old and we were up there for a match. We decided to go ahead and pick our puppy at that early age and bring it home. Ordinarily, we would have waited until they were older, but we decided to take the puppy home that day. A few days later, Julie, who owned the litter, had to go out of town for an emergency. She boarded the puppies at a kennel and they all died. The only puppy left was the one that we brought home. He turned out to be a very nice male. We felt very bad, so we let Julie have him back. We didn't have the heart to keep him, because she was so heart-broken and we thought we would do a similar breeding to Commander. We never got around to doing that, unfortunately. Julie moved back to Arizona, taking that puppy with her. I don't believe she ever entered him in a show.

What was the best litter you ever bred?

T.J.: Probably Memory's first litter was our best litter. I liked Fancy. Fancy was my favorite of all the dogs. That's the one I told you about that got hold of a balloon. She was just a natural. I had a friend who was into Shepherds who called Samoyeds short-steppers. He was a professional handler, showing a pretty big Sammy bitch. They called us into the ring in arm-band order and I was just ahead of him. I decided I was going to show him how my little short-stepper could go, so I laid back. I let the other dogs get way ahead of me and I really let Fancy out. We left his dog pretty well. As I got to the traffic, I slowed her down. I was moving her on a totally loose lead and I would just talk to her. When I wanted her to slow down, I would tell her, "Easy girl, easy girl," and she would listen to me pretty well. I won that day under Ralph Morrison. Ralph said, "It's like a machine. Whatever speed you got, you never give her a jerk or anything. She just goes right with you." I didn't realize it was that obvious. I was doing it to aggravate my friend. It obviously impressed the judge.

Nelda: T.J. is saying that he feels our first litter was our best litter because we had so much fun showing those puppies. It was a joy to watch them grow up and fulfill the promise that they showed at an early age. We felt like we had made the right decision in the breeding program. We traveled quite a bit with those puppies and made friends with people throughout the United States. We had a lot of fun specializing dogs. Sometimes we would special Memory and Taj, Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver, and Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinchill. I would show Memory and T.J. would show the male. Sometimes he would go up and sometimes I would.

T.J.: Sometimes neither one of us



*Silvertip's Dixie Tradition, "Toodle" (Ch. El Sol's Lucky Prince x Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Countess).
Winners Bitch and Best of Winners under judge John Connerly.*



Silvertip's Dixie Destiny (Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene x Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Countess) at seven months.

would.

Nelda: We went to Little Rock, Arkansas. T.J. and Fancy won the major from the Bred-by class and I went Reserve with her litter-sister, Scarlet, from the Puppy class. Our daughter Theresa, who was too young to show in Junior Showmanship, took Fancy into the Breed ring as Winners Bitch and Fancy went Best of Opposite Sex over Memory and another previously undefeated special from Ohio.

One time we had Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver and Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill entered. I showed Memory and T.J. showed the male. He won Best of Breed the first day and placed second in Group. The next day, I won Best of Breed with Memory and T.J. took her into the Group ring. Vincent Perry, who judged Breed the previous day, was doing the Group. T.J. went into the Group with Memory and won a Group Second.

T.J.: Vincent Perry said, "If you'd have had your male, you would have gone all the way."

Nelda: He said, "That was going to be my Group winner of the day." He liked both of them.

T.J.: That was before they split the Working Group. He also was doing Best in Show, so if I would have had the chance of winning Best in Show, that would have been the day.

Nelda: We didn't seriously campaign dogs as specials. We were doing it to win Best of Breed and we took them into the Groups ourselves. We had a handler show a dog only once or twice. When Memory was a puppy, we wanted to finish a champion because that was going to be our first champion. When we ran out of shows, she was in wonderful coat, so we sent her off to Tennessee for some shows with Michelle Billings. Memory finished and we brought her right back home. Once we sent a dog to Texas for two shows, but he would not perform for that handler. After that, we said if we could not go to shows our dogs would just stay home.

T.J.: That was Taj. He had just won the Deep South and everybody thought he was a nice dog. At least, they let me believe they thought he was a nice dog. We got a phone call from Texas from Don Winslow, and he said, "T.J., never send that dog with that man again. We didn't even know who he was. He just would not perform."

Nelda: When our puppies were young we used to start training very early. We primarily free-showed our dogs. We didn't like to have to get down and hand stack them. It certainly made a better impression in the ring if your dog just stopped itself naturally, foursquare, which ours normally did. We would set up a show ring, and all the people would come and work their dogs. When we got to the show, all we would have to do was groom our dogs and step into the ring,

whereas some people were out in the parking lot working their dogs hours before the show. We did our work at home and we just went to the shows and relaxed and had fun. It's important to have a good dog to begin with and have the proper nutrition and socialization as a puppy so your dog has

free. We have a new motor home and we're ready to travel, so maybe the time is right. I would like to have a dog as a companion, and if it worked out that we got one that could really be specced, maybe we would take it to shows. When we started, champions were entered in "Specials Only" compe-



Ch. Silvertip's Snowfield, "Puddin" (Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene x Am/Can Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fascination). Winners Bitch, Best of Winners, Best of Opposite Sex under judge Dr. Greathouse, Beaumont, Texas.

all of these things going for it. Certainly, you have to have a dog with a good gait to be a consistent winner. When we went to matches, people would say, "Oh, no. Not those people with the white dogs again."

It's nice to look back on those days and sometimes wish you were back at that point, when everything was new and exciting. We've been without a dog for several years now, but we're almost footloose and fancy

titution and I still use that word. I don't think we would ever go into any type of a big breeding program. Those days are behind us.

Will you please describe for us your ideal Samoyed?

T.J.: My ideal Samoyed is the one that conforms closest to the standard. I like a compact dog, a good moving dog with a lot of expression. A nice coat helps. In this

area, it's kind of hard to have a really glamorous coat like some of the Northern dogs carry. It's not hard to pick the good ones. If you have a class of good ones, that's the easy one to judge. What's hard is to decide which fault is more severe for your third and fourth.

Which faults do you find most difficult to forgive?

T.J.: I'm hung up on temperament, so I'd definitely penalize severely for bad temperament. In a puppy class, I wouldn't penalize a puppy that doesn't stand for exam, but it's a shame to see adult dogs that are very nice behave poorly in the ring. Sometimes the handler moves so slowly that the dog just zig-zags all the way down and back, never allowing me to see the dog's gait. I normally move a dog three times and I'm very clear about what I want them to do. I say, "Would you please move the dog a little faster on a loose lead so I can see his natural gait?" After three times, if I don't get to see the gait, knowing the dog is a nice dog, there's no way that I can put that animal up, because I never did get to see his movement.

Nelda: T.J. likes to see a dog moving clean, coming and going. That's one thing he requires. He likes good sidegait, but if the dog moves true coming and going, ordinarily it has an adequate sidegait. I like to have a dog with a lot of sparkle. If you want to show a dog, you need a dog that has everything. I like a balanced dog with a beautiful head, dark eyes and dark pigment. I don't like breaks in pigment or spotted noses. I can take a little bit of a faulty front, but I don't like to see a faulty rear. When you're going towards the judge he is seeing the head, the expression, everything. When going away, the only thing he is seeing is the rear. Over the years, we've had pretty good success sorting out the puppies that had better balance and movement. You have to go with what you have and look for the next generation to improve on those things that you're lacking.

What about tailsets, ears, coat and that sort of thing?

T.J.: All of it is important. If you've got a class of six dogs out there and you've got one that has an extremely low tailset, it's obvious. An extremely low tailset would be a more severe penalty than ears a little wider apart, because a low tailset makes the dog look long in back. It's just a case of evaluating the dogs you see that day and what the situation is.

Nelda: In our personal breeding program, a dog has to have a good tailset or it throws off the entire balance. It's nice to have a good set of ears, but it's not as critical as the tailset as far as the overall balance of the dog. We like a nice, strong back. Coat is kind of a touchy situation in the deep South. Most of the dogs don't carry an extremely glamorous coat as some of the

Northern dogs; however, it does depend on bloodlines. We like a harsh, standoff coat, because the softer coat would just look limp and wilt in this humidity. The dense undercoat protects them from humidity. We like nice, white, sparkling coats, hence our kennel name "Silvertips of Dixie." We've had a couple with small biscuit spots on the face or

as soon as it got full length, it was completely straight. I can tolerate a little bit of wavy coat under the tailset or on a young puppy, because I know that's typical in some bloodlines to do that as it comes in, and then it straightens out and is a nice, harsh coat.

I like to see a dog in a natural state, even in the show ring. I don't like to see



*Ch. Silvertip's Nicolas O' Dixie (Ch. Count Togwootee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver).
Winners Dog under judge Melbourn Downing.*

a few little freckles.

T.J.: That's not unusual. If a dog has good pigment, you're going to find a little biscuit around the ears.

Nelda: When the children were small and we'd have a litter of puppies, Ted always picked out the one that he said had ruffles around its neck. They had a nice, big, furry neck, so he liked the ones with the ruffles. (laughter) Coats change. When our puppies were maturing, or after a bitch had whelped a litter and was coming back into coat, sometimes the coat grew so fast that it had a tendency to be a little wavy, but

dogs that have been sculpted to make an appearance from across the ring, or excessively trimmed. Some even trim almost all the pants off a dog now and that's totally unnatural. They trim the tuckups and the dog looks like it has tuckup. Sometimes when you put your hands on the dog, it's just all fat, no tuckup, and a sagging topline. So, it's really hard to judge from outside the ring. You see what appears to be a nice dog from outside the ring and you wonder why it went last in its class and, sometimes, these are the reasons.

Is the bite sometimes a reason?



Ch. Silvertip's Angel Of Dixie (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory in Silver).



Am/Can Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fasionation, "Sassy" (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory in Silver).

Nelda: Yes. If you have to have a fault on a nice specimen it would be the bite, because only the judge would see the bite, but you'd hate to take anything in with an obvious fault. Of course, you're looking for the best in each dog that's in the ring. When I judged the Sweepstakes at the Chicago Specialty, I had been accustomed to running the training classes for the Baton Rouge Kennel Club, but when you get into a ring where it's an actual judging situation with a class of fifteen to twenty dogs, you suddenly realize, "Hey, this is the real thing. I have to sort all these dogs out," it's a different feeling, but it is a fun experience. After you've done so many years of breeding, it kind of comes naturally.

What about eye color?

T.J.: We like dark eyes. A lot of expression comes from the eyes and the darker the better.

Is there anything about the standard that you would change?

T.J.: No, the standard is just fine. I would like to have had the opportunity to change some dogs, take the rear off one, the front off this one, the head off that one and the tail off another. You could have built yourself a show-stopper for sure. The standard is just as it should be.

Nelda: It's kind of difficult to win with a 21-inch male in many areas. Most of the time, I find the males that win are to the top of or above the standard, but that's possibly something that could be different in other

areas. A lot of people think the bitch standard should be raised because so many of the bitches are 22 inches, but the standard has been as it is and worked for many years. People should adhere more to the standard, as far as trying to breed to the correct size. At the Group level, it's hard to win with a small bitch. A nineteen-inch bitch is very small for this area, so most people breed to the middle of the standard or above for their show puppies.

Would you be in favor of a disqualification for height?

T.J.: It wouldn't really bother me. When I judge, I generally try to pick dogs that are within the standard, but a good, small dog can win if he's the best I have in the ring that day. As a matter of fact, there are several small dogs that I like a lot.

Nelda: You have to realize, we're down here in the deep South and we have no experience with sledding our dogs or herding our dogs, so we don't know if a small dog would be inadequate pulling a sled in several inches of snow, and we don't know to what extent a dog that would be very much over the standard could work with a team of average size dogs. So, we don't really know, as far as the working aspect, whether these things would be a big hindrance. I think people who have that experience would tend to know more about that part of the standard.

T.J.: I think if the dog is over the standard he should be penalized. If you have a

dog within the standard that was just as good conformation-wise, the dog within the standard should be the dog that wins.

Even if the dog that's over the standard is the best one in the ring, would you have a problem with that?

T.J.: If he's just a little over the standard and he's well balanced and he has a good front and good rear and he moves good and everything else is okay, and I have other dogs in the ring that have faults, I would definitely go with the one that's a little over the standard, yes.

Have you ever done any obedience?

T.J.: Not really, no. Never have.

Nelda: We've had a few dogs that we worked with a little bit at home, but we've never gotten involved with it. In fact, I was thinking that if I ever got another dog I would like to train it in obedience, because that would be a way that we could show and just compete with ourselves and not have to compete with other Sammy exhibitors and breeders.

T.J.: Personally, I'd rather compete with the other exhibitors.

You have a very competitive streak, don't you?

Nelda: In every facet. T.J. raised Beagles which he ran in field trials. He raced boats. He's done so many things that were competitive in his life, whereas I'm more laid-back and I roll with the punches.

T.J.: I ran track, raced boats. Second place is like kissing your sister.

Nelda: That's my husband's attitude.

"Don't give me Reserve. Leave me out of the ribbons, but don't give me Reserve." (laughter) That's what they say, the whole of the United States doesn't know you were there if you are out of the ribbons. Times have changed so much since we first started showing. When we had our first litters, we fed them better than we ate ourselves. We cooked up all kinds of concoctions for their coats: tomatoes, garlic and scrambled eggs. Prime rib, practically. We had a good friend who was a butcher and when the meat that was ground for sale was not sold in one day, they would sell it to the soap factories for a few cents a pound. He sold it to us for the same price. We had a special freezer that we kept our dog meat in and they ate, probably, a half a pound of meat per day. Of course, they had luxurious fur but, eventually, when we lost our butcher friend, the dogs had to settle for a normal diet.

T.J.: The vets would continually tell us that we didn't have to do all of that so, finally, we started feeding them dog food like everybody else.

Did you see changes in the coats?

Nelda: We did it on a gradual basis and, by then, there were so many improved dog foods with more protein and just a better formulation, that we were able to use just the dry foods. The dogs were not picky eaters, so they didn't mind eating the same thing daily. We used a variety of brands through the years. At one time we were feeding the Iams products and our dogs did well on that. We had a little co-op going. We would get it delivered to our house and then the other members of the kennel club would come and pick theirs up. I think now it's available most places.

We did our own grooming. When we had our first Sam, we learned how to groom from Kathryn Tagliaferri. For shows, she would have them professionally groomed. We did that a couple of times, but the second or third time I had taken a dog for show grooming, there were so many going they would schedule one Samoyed a day. We had to take ours in five or six days before the show. There was a pond in front of our house. A neighbor's child let our dog out the day before the show and she jumped into the pond. The \$30 bath was gone in a flash. She came up covered with seaweed, so I had to rebathe her. I decided it was too much trouble to take my dog to Baton Rouge, drop her off, go back and pick her up. I knew I could do as well, so we started bathing our own dogs and for many years we had some of the whitest dogs in the ring. We did a pretty good job of grooming, I must say. We certainly didn't do it a week prior to the show.

What did you use?

Nelda: We started off with Snowy Coat shampoo and then, later on, I made a concoction with glycerin, Ivory Snow and



Am/Can Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Sensation CDX, "Pootsie" (Ch. Count Togwotee of Pinehill x Ch. Ka-Tag's Memory In Silver). Winners Bitch and Best of Breed under judge Maxwell Riddle.

white vinegar. Then there were other shampoos that were developed - those blue and green shampoos for the white dogs - and we kind of got a little lazy and started going to those products. Then, the Orvus soap that you get from the veterinarian or the horse supplies. We used some of the other horse products, too. They all work about the same. It's a matter of keeping the dogs reasonably clean before a bath and thoroughly grooming the dog before a bath. Most of our dogs were in and out of the house all the time, so they were usually kept in pretty

good condition and could even go to a show without a bath. We did not have to bathe them before every show when we were showing consistently.

Have you had problems with hot spots down here in the South, with a double-coated breed?

T.J.: Not very often. I can only think of one dog and I can't remember which one it was. It seems like we had a male that had a hot spot on his side.

Nelda: I think that was "Harry," Silvertip's Southern Comfort. He had a small hot spot which healed up pretty fast. The first

time we saw a dog with a hot spot was in Arkansas, and it was about three or four inches in diameter. We didn't even know what a hot spot was.

T.J.: If you keep a dog groomed at least once a week, you don't have that problem. Hot spots occur when you have a lot of matting, if I'm not mistaken.

And dampness, where the coat's not thoroughly dry.

Nelda: To avoid that situation, when we had the concrete kennel runs, we would hose and disinfect the kennel runs and then we waited until they were completely dry to put the dogs back outside. That way, we didn't have them running up and down in the wet runs.

T.J.: Samoyeds keep themselves clean. They don't like to be dirty to start with and, as long as everything is dry, you can keep them relatively clean. The only time they have any doggy odor on them is when they run on a wet kennel run, so we kept them dry.

What kind of kennel setup did you use for your dogs?

T.J.: We had four runs. Three of them were 4 x 30 and one was 8 x 30. We had a room off the back of our den with swinging doors that they could come in and out of during the day and that room was air conditioned. We also had a bathtub that was mounted so that we could stand up to bathe the dogs. On the inside we had four compartments, about 4 x 4. We'd bring the dogs in at night and I had guillotine doors that we could let down to keep them from going out when I wanted to keep them inside.

What do you think is the best footing?

T.J.: That's a good question. I was wondering that myself. We first had pea gravel and that tended to stain the dogs. Then we had the runs cemented and that was rough on their coats and might, possibly, be bad on their pasterns. I don't have anything to verify that, but I'm thinking that it could very easily break them down.

Nelda: Don Winslow from Texas had a severe problem with whatever he put in his kennels at one time. I think he was losing dogs, and, eventually, he realized it was coming from the footing and changed to something else. That's why they were without dogs to show for several years. I don't remember exactly what it was. We had the backyard fenced, as well as the kennel runs, and the dogs would get out and exercise on the grass.

The dogs stayed inside a lot. We usually had three or four dogs sleeping at the foot of the bed. Taj never got on the bed during the night. The bitches would jump on the foot of the bed and ease their way up until they were right next to our pillows. Taj always stayed on the floor until we woke up. Then he would pounce on the bed. One night, he was wagging his tail, just pawing at T.J. and we didn't know what the problem was. He wagged his tail and we were splashed with water. The piping going to the dishwasher had broken and was flooding the house, so he alerted us to that. Otherwise, he was a perfect gentleman. The dogs stayed inside quite a lot. We had some type of tile on the floors and it didn't seem to hurt their feet. They had good feet and pasterns. I guess it was because of the balance of being inside some, outside some, and having the yard to run around in the grassy areas. If we'd had a lot of dogs, they would have spent a lot more time on the cement runs and that could be a problem.

To be continued ...



Ch. Silvertip's Snow-Mac Heritage, "Jenny" (Am/Can Ch. Shaloon of Drayalene x Am/Can Ch. Silvertip's Dixie Fascination) at seven months. Winners Bitch and Best Opposite. Pictured with Phoebe Faulmann. Phoebe's first win. This was to be the start of something big.

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