

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Beth Ingram
SNOWDRIFT
Prattville, Alabama

This interview was conducted at the Ramada Inn Civic Center in Birmingham, Alabama in October of 1990 by Katie LeCour.



How and when did you first become involved with Samoyeds?

In February 1945, I opened my kennel. Before that, in October 1944, I had seen some pictures in Dog World magazine. I had some Spitz at that time. I didn't know they were any different. My husband asked me what I wanted for my birthday in November. I said, "I'd like to have one of those dogs. He said, 'Honey, I think it's the same thing, it just has a different name.' I said, 'I don't think so.'" So we bought a bitch from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She was four months old. When she came, I had never been more surprised in all my life. I had never seen anything like that. Of course, she was dirty, and I gave her a bath. When my husband came home from work, I told him to go look in the backyard and see if he saw anything. He did. I said, "Now, do you think it's a

Spitz?" He said, "No, ma'am, it can't be!" We lost her from a lymph infection. I cried, so he bought me two bred bitches and a male. We were lucky, we got some good ones, which you could hardly do back then, because not very many people had them for sale. I bred good ones from these dogs.

Were some of these your foundation stock?

That male and the two bitches were my foundation stock. Of course, I kept a couple of puppies out of the litters. We were on our way and fell lock stock into the barrel. I was one of the lucky ones, my husband loved the dogs. He loved to show and judge matches and he loved people. He died of a heart attack in July 1980. He wanted so badly to live. He knew his heart was bad and we knew it was going to happen, but I wasn't ready for it. We never are.

A little while before he died, I told him that I thought that we had been in it long enough. I thought it was time to think about retiring. I said, "If anything were to happen to you, I would get out of it." He looked at me and said, "Why? Just tell me why. What would you do? What are you going to do? If you quit dogs, what are you going to have? They're your life." I said, "I don't really know until that time comes."

After he died, I had a ten-month-old male puppy, and he was really my husband's dog. His name's Ch. Snowdrift Silver Sweepstakes. He is one of the best ones that we ever bred. He had maybe something like a major when my husband died. I said that when I finished him I was going to retire. C.J. Faure finished him for me in Nashville, Tennessee. I said then I would probably quit. I didn't show anymore after that. I still don't show. I'm usually involved in catalog sales. I've had so much experience in that line that the kennel club asked me to do it. I really don't mind, I enjoy it.

If my husband were here today, he would be thrilled at the chance for us to tell people how we came into dogs. I'm going to tell you this for the record, I have never been a member of the Samoyed Club of America, and I'll tell you why. When I got into Sammies, back then there was something like the International Samoyed Club, but it's no longer, because the AKC said they couldn't have but one national club. I had applications for both of them, and I filled out the one for the International. While I was

talking to somebody after that, they said I couldn't belong to both of them. I have never applied for SCA membership. Not that I have anything against them, I always help where I can, but for personal reasons I haven't. I get the bulletin anyway from a friend of mine, so I see no point in becoming a member now, at this late date. Since my husband died, I have more sponsors now for SCA, than most dogs have fleas. I really don't think it's worth it at this late date.

Do you still have some Sammies around your house?

I had three, two dogs and a bitch. I had to have my bitch put to sleep, she had cancer. The vet told me there wasn't anything they could do for her, so I said that was the only humane thing. We buried her in our pet cemetery on our property. I said at that time, that when I was gone or the two left were gone, that's it. Last year, somebody I knew had a beautiful litter of Sammy pups. They brought them by for me to see. You guessed it, I was a fall guy, I bought a male. His name is Snowdrift Gilbralter Buck. We call him Bucky. He hasn't been shown yet. He's a slow maturer. He's getting ready, but he's not there yet. I had a good look at him Sunday and said, "You're looking better all the time. Hurry up!" You can't wait forever.

My champion, Sweepie (Ch. Silver Sweepstakes), was a fast maturer. He got his first points from Puppy class. We were very proud of him for that. But he is one of those that is born to show without trying. He will still set himself up right in there even though he is retired. I could say, "Stay, Sweepie," and he would go into attention. He sets himself up, baits and never moves a muscle. He kicks his tail up. Usually I had bait in my pocket. If I didn't give it to him, he'd look at my pocket. He's my house pet now. I bought a sign a while ago that says, "Vicious Attack Dog." If I put that on my door, he wouldn't bite anything but something to eat. (laughter)

I love Sammies. I've always wanted what was best for them. I do x-ray my dogs. My vet can tell you that I've always x-rayed my dogs. I had some that had hip dysplasia, but everybody does. We cannot play God. I believe in x-raying and all that. But after all is said and done, all the x-raying you do is not going to stop it. It will help, but it's not going to stop it, because the only thing that

it proves, which is good, is that sire and dam are clear. It does not mean that they cannot produce a dysplastic puppy. Maybe someday it will, but the chances are small. We have had them where they have had just a very slight degree. We gave them away without papers. When they were so crippled they couldn't get up, we did have them put down. I have only had about two that were that bad, several years apart.

We've been living where we are now for 29 years. We have a nice kennel. It's a big kennel, it has 15 indoor/outdoor chain link runs with cement. The puppy kennel where the mother dogs were kept has seven runs, also chain link cement. Then I have a whelping house that has five stalls in it for mother dogs. That's where my three dogs are kept now. The big kennel is empty now, so quiet and it's so sad.

Was that just for your Samoyeds, or was it a boarding kennel?

I never boarded any dogs. I really didn't want the responsibility because you have to have insurance. If something happened to a dog, it would have driven me crazy. I wouldn't be able to stand it. I've kept a dog or two once in a while for friends when they were going off, but I knew the dog and knew it was clean and had all of its shots. I never would take a dog in for anything unless I knew it had all of its shots, and no parasites.

When I first started in 1945, there was no permanent vaccine for distemper. We only had temporary shots, and they were not worth the water that you flush in that stool in there.

Did you lose some dogs to distemper?

I had distemper in my kennel one time way back. I lost a whole litter of puppies. We were helpless, there wasn't anything we could do about it, we didn't have any vaccine. When parvo broke out back in 1978 or something like that, they had no vaccine for that. We got parvo. We had taken our puppies to the vet for their distemper shot. There had been a Doberman at the vet's that had it. They didn't know enough about it. My vet said they didn't know what it was. My puppies were kept there while I ran an errand then I went back to pick them up. I guess they contracted it. I went haywire, because I remembered those years of distemper, and we didn't have anything for it.

It was the same situation. My vet told me, "I wish I knew more about it. I don't know anything about it. The only thing we have is a cat vaccine. I'm going to give your pups some of that. I'm not going to say whether it's going to help or not, but if anything will, it will. That's all we have."

We got it in two litters. One litter did not have it very bad. The litter that my Ch. Sweepie was in had it real bad, but we did not lose anything because of a wonderful veterinarian. Sweepie had it the worst and almost died. We were going to dog shows in our motor home and had to take him with us so we could give him his medicine. There were five in that litter, and the other four were all right. Ch. Sweepie kept having diarrhea and it was horrible. We kept him in a crate in the bathroom in the motor home. We kept him cleaned up and sprayed the motor home. After a while, he checked up. Therefore, he was very early to become a house dog. He loves the house. If I have an errand to run, I just leave him in the kennel and come back. When I come back, I go down and get him and bring him back to the house with me. He loves to ride. I let him ride in the van in his crate. It amazes my sister that he'll jump in that van and go right in his crate. She can't believe it! (laughter) Ch. Sweepstakes is more like a person than a dog. He's a very smart dog.

Can you name some of the dogs that you started out with and where you went from there, sort of bring us up to date?

We bought the three from the same man that we bought the four-month-old bitch that died. Her name was Pearl of Whitefish. She came from Whitefish, Montana. The others were Etta of Polarcap, Vardo of Polarcap and Dewie of Polarcap. They were our first foundation dogs.

Did you breed those to other dogs?

Yes, once or twice. We just have one daughter, Joyce Anne. My husband's name was Rowan. He was named after the doctor who delivered him. My name is Beth. We started out with the name Beth-Rowan, but I didn't like it. One winter we had snow. We have it occasionally, but not often. I didn't have that many dogs and I just had individual pens for them in the backyard. The Sammies were in one pen. A snowdrift slid off the garage right on top of the Sammies. I said, "That's it, it's going to be Snowdrift!"

So we changed it and registered it with American Kennel Club. We had had five litters at that time.

There were rumors that we were a puppy factory. I even had somebody ask me one time at a National Specialty if I was a puppy factory. I said, "Why, of course not!" I know reliable breeders today who breed more puppies in a year than I ever did. I would say we had an average of four litters a year, sometimes not that many. I love the breed so, I can't get enough of it. I finally faced the fact that I absolutely had too many dogs and it was working me to death. We always had somebody to help us who lived in our mobile home. We've been fortunate and get pretty good help. But with me going to shows, people aren't going to do what I'm going to do when I'm there. Of course, when I got home, I had to check off the dogs, see what shots were needed, what baths were needed and all that stuff. Finally, I told my husband that we just had to cut down. I said, "You and I neither one are getting any younger." It was about that time he started having heart problems.

What was the largest number of dogs that you kept at a time?

I'm ashamed to say. I know exactly how many, and it surprised even me. We had an outbreak of heartworm in a German Shepherd kennel across the river. I'm not near the river, I'm about seven or eight miles from the river, but they were close to the river. My vet called me and said he needed to check my dogs for heartworm because they had an outbreak. I told him all right. He said, "I'll come out to your kennel and bring my secretary. I'll keep a record of everything we've done." I had puppies, young stock, half grown puppies and my breeding stock. We used my grooming house to do all of that. I had a table, we used it to check each dog.

When the vet got through, he said to me, "I don't believe it!" I said, "What is it you don't believe?" He said, "I don't believe that I checked 77 dogs and I didn't find a single case of heartworm." I said, "You didn't check any 77 dogs!" He said, "Yes, ma'am, I did, your puppies and all." I said, "My stars, I knew I had a lot of dogs, but I haven't counted them lately! I didn't dream I had 77!" I put many of them up for sale and got rid of some of them. I had to. It shocked

even me, because I had been going to shows and did not realize. You'll see this one and that one in a litter and you want to keep this one and that one. If you don't watch it, you're going to be overstocked. That's what happened to me. I cut down to about 25 dogs. Then, when my husband died, I had about that many. I kept about ten or twelve for a while. In about 1984, I cut down to three. Then I had two. I don't even want to look at a litter of puppies. I love them dearly, but I don't trust myself because I know I'll go home with one.

I saw one yesterday at this show that I would have loved to have had, but I said, "Beth, no, don't look, you can't have it." I've had my day. I love to show. I'm like the old fire horse, you know, when he heard the bell, he jumped the fence. That's the way I am. When I see anybody showing in the ring, I want to get in there so bad I don't know what to do, but I can't do it. I had surgery on my knee. It did not make me crippled, but I'm afraid that if I get to running in the ring it might give way and I might fall. I let C.J. Faure do my handling when I have something to show. He does a beautiful job. He and his wife, Lisa, do it.

I've had a lot of experiences and funny things happen to me during dog shows. I do believe the biggest boo-boo I ever pulled anywhere was when I was in Asheville, North Carolina years ago. We were showing in an old auditorium downtown and were set up in the basement. At that time, I was a professional handler. We had to go up the stairs to get to the ring. I knew I had a conflict between the Sammy and the Keeshond. I knew that, but I thought I had plenty of time. When we were just finishing up the Sammies, I heard them calling the Keeshonden and called my arm band. I got my ribbon, ran out of the ring, went flying down the stairs, threw the Sammy in the crate, grabbed the Keeshond and ran back up the stairs. My head was whirling I was going so fast. I walked on in the ring. I got in the ring and everybody started to laugh. I looked at my dog and at myself and didn't see anything wrong. After a while, my head started to clear. Percy Roberts was judging and was standing very still with arms folded, glaring at me. I looked around and I was shocked to see that I was in a class of Irish Setters! (laughter) I said, "Mr. Roberts, I'm awful

sorry. I just turned too quick." The Keeshond ring was the next ring over. He said, "Oh, that's all right, hon, I've been thinking these red dogs need a change of color for a long time." I thought that was sweet of him to say that.

Did you make it to the Keeshond ring?

Yes, but if there would have been a hole in the floor when everybody was laughing, I would have gone right through it. (laughter) I think that's about the funniest thing that ever happened to me. I'd tell people about that and they'd say, "Beth, you didn't?" Oh, yes, Beth did! I looked at all those red dogs and was petrified. I've done a lot of funny things.

My husband and I were at a dog show in Miami, Florida. He and some of the handlers wanted to go down to the Keys fishing. We had a pickup and the motor home with

us. We had dogs in the pickup. We took the dogs out and put them under the awning of the motor home. They took the pickup and loaded the back end with handlers and went down to the Keys. On the way back, my husband got a ticket by a helicopter for going over 25 miles an hour. He remarked to the handlers with him, "You group ought to pay this ticket, you all got a free ride." (laughter) Pete Dawkins, now a judge, was with them. He said, "We weren't driving, you were."

I have my memories and I had a lot of fun. I made a lot of friends. I'm still active and can help out. I am a member of the Southern Samoyed Coalition and have been since it was organized. We were talking at the Montgomery, Alabama show and they wanted me to do the catalogs at National. They wrote to me and told me that I was the



Am/ Ir Ch. Rostav of Rozelle, "Roz."



Ch. Snowdrift Silvermist Americ.



Ch. Snowdrift Silversam Americ.

catalog sales chairman. Barbara Skalka sent me some names to contact for the committee. Some of them turned me down. I finally got down to Nancy Foster and Betty Powell, and that was all I had. Nancy couldn't come after all, she had sickness in her family. I asked Barbara if I could just pick somebody at random because I was getting turned down right and left. She said to go ahead and get anybody I could find. I contacted Michelle Harris and Lynn and Richard Bullard in Atlanta, but they won't be here until tomorrow because their son's in the hospital. I talked to her Friday night, and she was going to try to come today, but I don't think she showed up. I hope her son's not worse. They were there. Their Sam took Best of Breed at this National Specialty.

I know I probably made a lot of goofs and didn't understand a lot of things, but I've been hard of hearing since I was four years old. I had an abscess in my ear and it burst. Back then, they didn't know of anything to do. I started wearing a hearing aid about ten years ago because my hearing was getting a little worse with age. I hear pretty good with it. I know a lot of people have criticized me who do not realize that I probably didn't understand because I couldn't hear them.

Would you like to take us through the years with some of your favorite or outstanding dogs?

I imported a lot of dogs. As far as I know, I imported the first Sammy from Australia to set foot on American soil. That was my Ch. Kobe Holm-Storm. He was not a champion when I bought him. Then we imported an Irish champion, Rostav of Rozelle. He did some terrific winning in the ring for us. I had a handler then by the name of Charles Corbett. He got out of it, he hasn't been in it for years, but he was a very good handler. He did a very good job with him. I bred a number one bitch with Ch. Rostav of Rozelle and got some gorgeous puppies. Once, at a dog show in Georgia, my handler came to me and said, "Beth, would you get mad if I asked you a question?" I said, "No, why?" That was before they started paying people to do the Group placings and all that. He said a client of mine asked me this, "If you take my Dane in the ring and win the Group, I'll give you \$50." Of course, that was a big price back then. I said, "Of course I won't be mad." He said he'd get somebody to handle my dog who would handle him to perfection. I can't think of the man's name now. The Groups came and he entered the Dane. My Irish and

American Rostav of Rozelle was in there with this other guy. Roz won the Group and the Dane placed fourth. (laughter) I was hugging the handler and my handler spoke up and said, "Boy, I'm glad I didn't handle that Sammy. If she would have hugged and kissed me like that, she would have broken my neck." I had squeezed him so hard!

Then we had another one that did a lot of winning for us. He was handled by Jack Potts from Texas. Jack is a judge now. Jack couldn't seem to do too much with him, but when I showed him, I won with him, so Jack said, "Listen, Beth, I'm going to sit at ring-side now and watch what you do that I can't do." I came out and said, "Did you find out?" He said no. (laughter) Jim Dandy Dog Food Company caught me and took a picture of us with Ch. Snowdrift Lucky Sweepstakes. He is the great-grandfather of my Ch. Snowdrift Silver Sweepstakes. I believe that show was in Fort Worth. I still have that picture. He was to be pictured on that Jim Dandy national advertisement. Jack was in the picture.

We had a very nice female that did a lot of winning. Her name was Ch. Snowdrift Varoushka. We called her Trusha. She was a well put together little bitch with a tight, high set tail. Her ears were set on a wide

skull. Her muzzle was short and broad. She had very good bone, and back then bone was very hard to get. She did a lot of winning for us.

When we imported one of my dogs, Ch. Silvermist of Kobe, he got lost coming over here. We were frantic. We finally got a telegram from the airline that he was there. We had called and they said they had not seen a white dog. He was sitting right there on the platform all the time. When we got him, he was curled up in his crate and was the most pathetic and unhappy thing. He just didn't care. He had been in transit so long he was completely worn out. When we got him, we didn't know what to feed him. He had been used to eating kangaroo meat. I didn't know where in tarnation I was going to get the kangaroo. (laughter) So we started buying horse meat for him. He didn't eat anything hardly because he wasn't used to dog food or anything. We kept on him and he finally got to where he would eat. Then he came out of himself and was a friendly, sweet dog. The number one thing that I never did like about him was he didn't have the dark eye that I liked, but they were almond eyes. They were beautifully shaped eyes, but they were not deep enough dark to suit me. He finished his American championship real fast though.

We have imported, trying to get the best that we possibly could. At one time, as far as I was able to determine back then, I held the record for the most Sammy champions in the United States, but not today, because I've been out of it too long. I did bring the Sammy to the South. There were none down here at that time. When I started, it took four dogs or four bitches to make a major. The entry fee was, for Open and whatever, \$4.50, and for puppies \$2.50. That doesn't even sound reasonable, but it was true. We tried to encourage people to show when they'd buy a Sammy, and when they started showing, we didn't have to take any extra ones. We didn't do that much because it was too much grooming. Sometimes we'd have six. We'd have four to make the major and a couple of puppies.

When we first started, we didn't even have a station wagon or anything. We didn't have anything but a truck. We used to take the dogs on the back of that truck. They'd be back there barking. (laughter) We bought a

station wagon, then we graduated to a van and then to a motor home. We kept going up. I sold my motor home after my husband died. We had the new 27-foot only 18 months when Rowan died. We bought it brand new. We had bought a Winnebago that was owned by one person. It started needing this and that, and my husband got aggravated and went down and bought a brand new one. I kept it about a year and then sold it. I did not sell it to dog people, I sold it to an older couple who live about ten or eleven miles from me. They had a smaller one, and I think they kind of wanted me to take it, but I told them I didn't want any because I had the van and could camp in it if I had to, if I went, and I wasn't going that much anymore. Now I have a station wagon and the van. I still have the van that we bought before my husband died. We bought it brand new. It has 62,000 miles on it and it's still going.

When we had that Siberian Express come through here in December 1989 and everything froze up, my station wagon was almost new, and my neighbor had a truck that was almost new. He came to my house and wanted to borrow my jumper cables to jump his truck with my station wagon. The station wagon wouldn't start either, so I said, "Try the van." It's an old '77, and it started! It's been a good one, it really has. It's been everywhere. It's been to Michigan twice that I know of, down to Florida and all over the place.

I have sold dogs hither and yonder to people who have finished them. I had a couple of dogs when I was a handler that I took back, showed for the owners and finished. Ch. Tammikins Teddy was our breeding, but the girl that bought him didn't realize that she was supposed to put the Snowdrift on his name. I couldn't put the name Snowdrift on it, as he was already AKC registered, but I remember the name. I have included a picture of Diane Chenault with two Snowdrift dogs and a puppy she got somewhere else. Both Snowdrift dogs were champions.

Then there was Ch. Snowdrift Moonlighter O'Kobe and Snowdrift Snowland Jill. I imported Ch. Whitemist Kouglia Kiff and Whitemist Kouglia Karra, a bitch from Australia. I had Ch. Snowdrift Snowwhite Elegance and Ch. Kluga of Kobe. Ch. Kluga

of Kobe was imported from Kobe, England. One of my puppies won a Puppy class down in Florida. Another one that did a lot of winning for us was Ch. Snowdrift Silvermist Americ, a homebred.

Did you show him mostly yourself, or did you have handlers on him, too?

Yes, I showed him myself. Back then, I was able to show myself. I loved it. I also had a dog called Ch. Snowdrift Grenadier Kara Sea, whom we called Casey. My husband showed some of the dogs, too. As I said, I'm one of the lucky ones. So many times one person likes dogs and the other isn't really interested. Snowwhite Elegance was a beautiful bitch. She was a gorgeous thing.

Who was your biggest winner of all the dogs you had?

I've had a lot of winners. I really believe that my import, in all truth and honesty, Irish and American Ch. Rostav of Rozelle, did more winning than anybody else. He was a big dog, but he was very short-bodied. He had a big, beautiful bear head on him. I believe that my Ch. Snowdrift Lucky Sweepstakes was the top one we bred ourselves, and my bitch, Ch. Snowdrift Snowwhite Elegance. Then there was Ch. Varoushka who did pretty well. They were probably the best.

Over the years, have you had a best dog that you ever owned or bred?

If I had to pick one, I would say my champion that I have now, Sweepie. He's my heart. He finished at Nashville, Tennessee.

How old is he now?

He'll be ten on his birthday.

When you were breeding your dogs, did you use pedigrees to decide who you were going to breed to who?

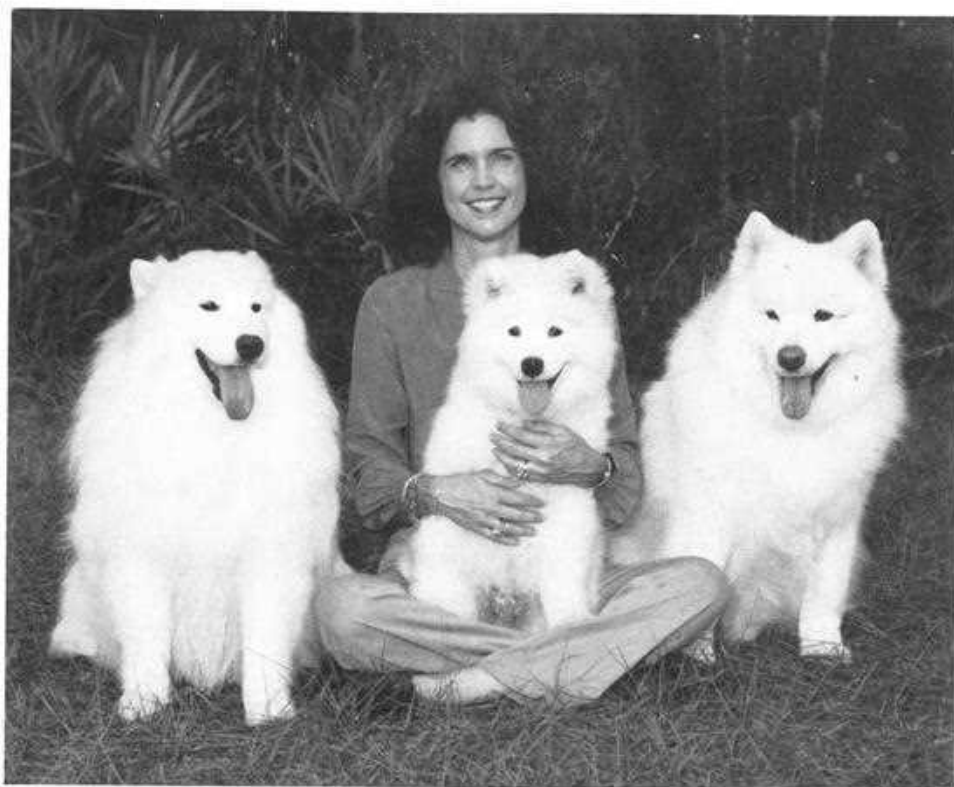
We did a lot of linebreeding. We would go into the family, and then the next time around we would outcross. Then we would go back in again. That's how we kept our heads. I'll admit I was a head hunter. I looked for everything, but that was the main thing I was looking for. I had seen so many Sammies back when I first started that had the most snipey looking, long, narrow muzzles and great big ears. Everybody has their preference. I know what the standard says. I tried to breed within the standard, but I know what I like and what was winning

then. Even though we all like to brag, I'm not bragging, I'm just proud that I did produce so many good dogs through the years. Of course, I'll never say I had the best ones, but I did work hard to try to get the best there was. If there was anything else I could have done, I don't know what it was, because we spent a lot of money on imports.

When you imported your dogs, did you ever travel to the other countries that you imported them from?

No, we didn't, but we knew through correspondence, and they had been over here and we had talked to them. We had written to them. My Australian dogs came from Irene Gates of the Whitemist Kennels. I think she really knew a good Sammy, because Ch. Whitemist Kougla Kiff and his sister, Whitemist Kougla Kara were very, very good dogs. We didn't even have an international airport then closer than Atlanta, and I had to go to Atlanta to pick them up. They came in on a Saturday, and Customs was closed until Monday. A friend of mine in Atlanta and I went out to the airport, took them out of the crates, walked them, fed them and stayed with them a long time. We were at the airport on Monday morning before Customs opened. I wanted to get them out of those crates, that was all I could think of. I've had a lot of experience with importing dogs.

When Roz came from Ireland, he got lost, too. We called Atlanta, and they hadn't seen him. We called every airline we could think of. We had gotten a cable that he was on his way, the time and everything, but he didn't come and didn't come. We called Atlanta, and they said they had not seen him. He was sitting right there. We finally called the airport manager, and he said he would try to look for him. We waited and waited and expected the airport to call us. Instead of the airport calling us, the railway express called. They used to be able to come by train. They had him. I was so mad I didn't know what to say. We went right down there and got him. I asked, "What are you doing with him? He's supposed to come in on the airplane. People don't do their work anymore." I don't know where he was all that long time. I have no idea. We ran up a phone bill you wouldn't believe to find that dog. Every time I'd see somebody, they'd ask if I'd heard from my dog. I didn't sleep



Diane Chenault with Ch. Snowdrift Romeo of Iceray and Nikki, a Snowdrift dog.

at night. I couldn't do anything. When the railway express called me, I was so surprised and relieved he was finally found and to know that they had him. It was so unexpected.

Who or what has influenced your breeding the most?

My husband and I were just in it ourselves. Of course, my daughter handles some and loves the dogs, and my grandchildren love them. But my husband and I were primarily the ones who owned and operated Snowdrift Kennel, and it was registered with the American Kennel Club. Nobody was in it with us. We had help, but they weren't in it.

Did you just sort of do what you did by studying and doing it on your own?

Yes. I did an awful lot of reading and studying on breeding. We had help with keeping the dogs groomed, fed and watered and other necessary things. The Lord knows that I have tried my best to do what was best for my dogs. I loved them, and my husband did, too. We tried to take good care of them. Our kennels were kept clean and disinfected. They never smelled or anything. We

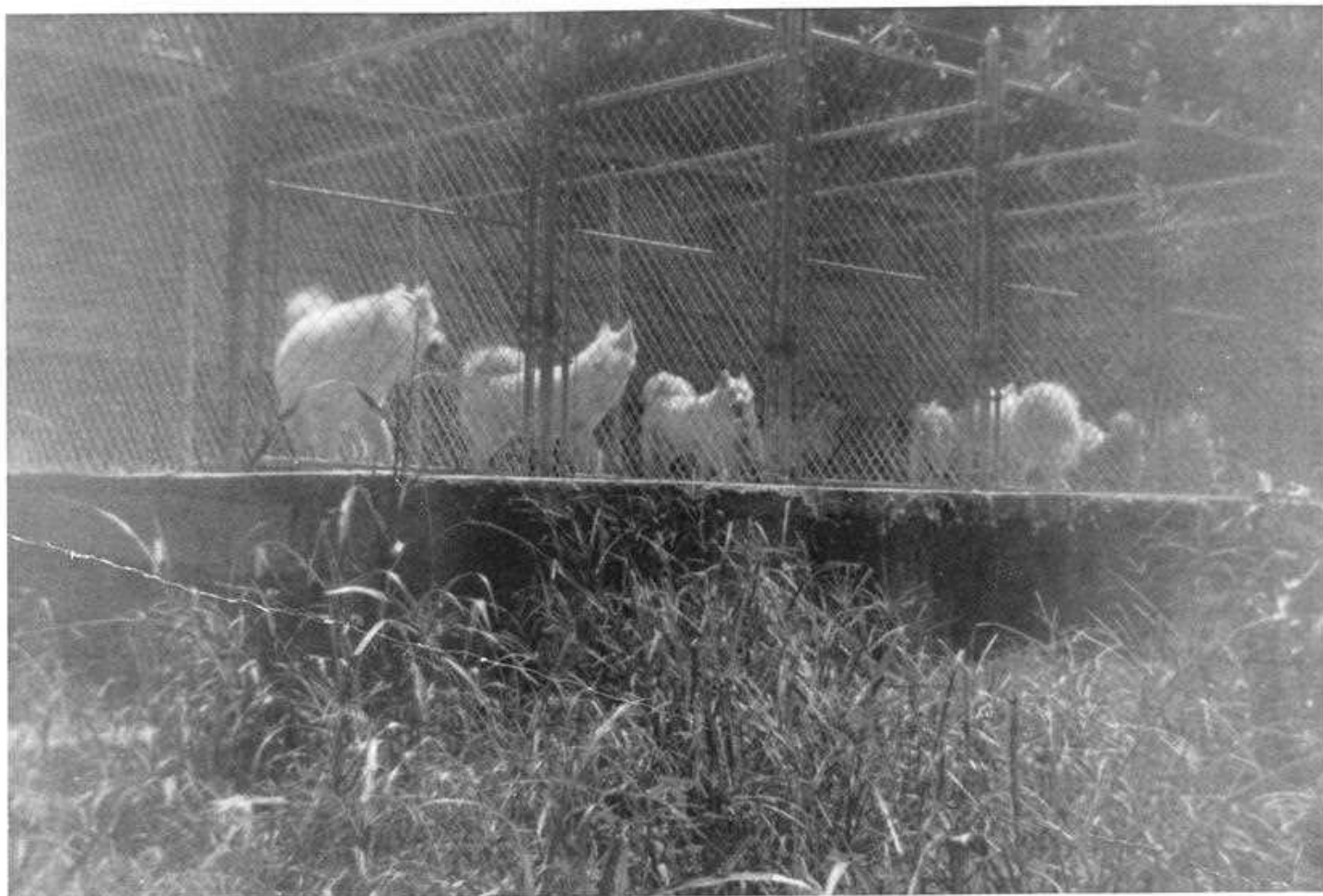
always kept them very clean. We washed down runs twice a day, morning and evening, every day, Sunday too.

When you were breeding your litters, did you name any of your litters by any sort of scheme?

Occasionally I did. It is really hard to come up with a suitable name for a Sammy. They're using names today that we wouldn't even have thought of back then, like Kiss Me Kate and things like that. Back then, we just used common names. I did use things like Lucky Sweepstakes, but most of my bitches usually got one name. Ellie's name was Snowwhite Elegance, but Varoushka's name was just Varoushka, which is Russian.

In the Sammies, how would you rate type, temperament and soundness in order of importance?

I'm a head hunter. I look at the real good typey heads. The second thing I'm looking for is good movement, especially good side movement. Now, I like good angulation, but I'm inclined to believe that today they're getting too much angulation on the dogs. If you watch them in the ring, they're moving like German Shepherds, with



Snowdrift Kennels, Prattville, Alabama.

all that angulation and that layback. Good temperament, too, is a must. I like a good tailset. I have only had one dog that had what we call a flag tail. It was just a pet, and I think we gave it away. The rest of the litter was all right. I see them in the ring occasionally, but not today like I used to; Snowdrift Sams, that is what I mean.

They've improved on a lot of things in Sammies. They are producing better type today than we had a long time ago. It was harder to get the type a long time ago than it is today. In years past, the worst thing we used to see was bad rears. The dysplasia was so bad. The biggest thing I'm seeing today is bad fronts. I've seen some awful fronts in dogs. I saw one moving in the ring here a while ago whose foot was going out and the other was going straight. Then I've seen them with the elbows out. I've seen them where they turn out and I've seen a fiddle

front, no chest.

I have a friend in Montgomery who breeds Sammies. I like her dogs' type very much, but she has no fronts on them, no chest. I told her, "It's a wonder you can even win at all, you have no chests on your Sams! You need to get away from what you have and breed to something outside of what you have, something with a good, strong layback, which you do not have." I try to give advice, but whether people follow it or not I don't know. People think I'm a know-it-all. I don't intend to be, but I've been there. I've bred them good and I've bred them bad. We all do.

The first thing I'm looking for is the head. Then, too, I'm looking for the best temperament. That's a must. I haven't seen but one aggressive Sammy in my life. I was at the Chicago International once when they were benched. A lady was going down the

line petting the dogs. A dog grabbed her coat sleeve, was growling and carrying on, and tore her coat sleeve. I had never seen that before in a Sammy. I don't recall who it belonged to, but there was a lot of speculation about what the dog did that day. None of my dogs have ever done that.

What about movement in Sammies? What do you like to see in the front, rear and side gait?

I like to see a good side gait. There are dogs that move well coming and going but do not move well going around the ring. I like to see a good strong Sam movement with a good long reach with the legs. But I do not like to see too much angulation. I like to see good angulation but not overboard, which I've seen in some dogs today. I think it's good to have angulation, because we need it, but when they have so much angulation that their back legs go way back

like a German Shepherd when they're moving, that's wrong for Sammies. They're not supposed to move that way. I like a good, sound, long stride gait. They're moving soundly and not moving like they're walking on nails or eggs, putting the foot down solid as they go, not tiptoeing around the ring.

What are you looking for in a head?

An ideal head is one that's broad, wedge-shaped, has well set ears and a defined stop, not too much stop, and a good, wide, profound muzzle, not like the Chows, not pushing back in the face like a Chow, but a good, sound, solid, broad muzzle. Not way out there and not way in there, I like it in between. I like good black points. I like dark eyes. Sometimes the pigment wears down, in the winter especially, but it usually comes back. I've had that happen a few times, but it was not permanent.

What about the ears?

I do not like big ears, and I do not like the little, tiny bear ears either. I like a good, well set ear on each side of the skull. I want to see a good, solid set ear of medium length, not real tiny and not big ears. I've seen Sammies with almost bear ears they're so small. They're not to my liking.

You mentioned that you think one of the biggest problems in the breed today is the poor fronts. What do you attribute that to?

That's what I'm seeing today. Those are the only two things that I am seeing,

especially the bad fronts. They're going to have to do something to improve them because we're seeing a lot of dogs with no chest at all. They need to let up on the angulation breeding a little bit. They're getting just a little bit overboard on that. I'm not saying all of them, but I have seen several that way. Bad selective breeding can and does cause bad fronts.

As far as winning in the show ring when you were showing, do you think that coat was very important to winning?

I think it is up to a point, but some judges, if the dog has a fair coat, fine. But on the other hand, I've always said this about a good coat, I like a good coat. The only thing about it is if a dog does have that overprofuse coat like my present Ch. Sweepie does, when he sheds, you can't miss it. It's hard to tell what's under that coat. The dog could have a wooden leg under that coat, but you can't see it. So I think it has its advantages and disadvantages. If I were a judge and a dog came to me in profuse coat, I would be apt to take more time going over that dog to be sure that I had not missed something under that coat. That can be done.

One time, years ago, before they disqualified cryptorchids and monorchids from the ring, there was a Sammy being shown. I had heard that the dog only had one testicle, but I had never had my hands on the dog and had no way of knowing. The dog won the Group at one of the shows. Later on, we saw

them down in the basement with the dog. This girl who was with me had heard the same thing. I told the handler, "That's a beautiful dog and he had a beautiful win today. Do you mind if I go over him?" He said no, and sure enough, he just had one. So we went to the AKC rep and protested. I said, "We know this is not an AKC rule, but we ask that it be excluded because legally the dog is not a sound dog and is not a whole dog." We were one of the first who complained about it. It was a beautiful dog, but he only had one testicle.

What was the outcome?

Shortly after that it became official. I don't know whether we had anything to do with it or not, but we did talk to the AKC rep and told him that I had felt it. We could have had something to do with it, I don't know. I have always felt that was a mistake on the part of the AKC because it is not legally a sound dog.

What kind of tail length and set do you like to see on a Sammy?

I don't like a tail too short. I like a tail that comes down to the hock. That's about right, not counting the hair. That means that the tip of the tail bone itself, because the hair could be that long. I like a tail that, when you pull it down, is even with the hock. That's an ideal tail length to me. We had a beautiful Sammy years ago that we bred, but his tail was too short. I never could do anything with him, so I quit showing him. Other than



*Above: Ch. Snowdrift Lucky Sweepstakes and Ch. Snowdrift Varoushka.
Left: Snowdrift Snowland Jill.*

that, he was pretty, but his tail was too short. (laughter)

How should the topline look?

I love a good topline. I can't stand a dog that's swaybacked. I have seen Sammies you could put saddles on and they would sink to the floor. I've seen them where you could put your whole hand down in there. One thing that's a must with me is a good topline, because I don't think that a Sammy without a good topline is really a good-looking dog.

What kind of feet should a Sammy have?

I don't like cat feet and I don't like splayed feet. I like a good, well-rounded foot that, when he puts it on the floor, isn't going to spread out. I don't like cat feet at all. I've seen dogs win that had cat feet. I could tell you one right now that was a top winner and had bad cat feet. He kept on winning. Even my husband noticed that dog had cat feet. Some judges are not aware of that evidently.

What is the ideal temperament in the Samoyed breed?

They should have a very good, smiling, Christmas expression the year round. They should be gentle, loving and intelligent. I don't think aggressiveness has any part in a Sammy temperament, because they are just not bred for that. If you go back in the history of Samoyed people, a long time ago, they used them for companions in their houses at fireside and had them to hunt and herd with, and they were gentle. The temperament has to be even for it to be a true Samoyed.

Is the standard a good standard?

I think it is. I see one or two minor faults in it, but not enough to speak of. When the SCA changed the standard several years ago, I wasn't even a member of the Samoyed Club of America, but I had been in Sammies for a long time. The AKC wrote me and sent me a copy of the proposed standard wanting me to let them know what I thought of it. I wrote down what I thought. When it finally came out, there were some changes in there that appeared to be maybe some of them that I had made, I don't know, but it was a good, sound standard. I was glad to see them set height for bitches and dogs.

One time we were going through Indianapolis and there was a dog show going on. We were on our way to Canada. We had



Ch. Snowdrift Antarctic Brutus.

bought out a Canadian kennel of English imports and were going up after the dogs. There were eight of them. We stopped in Indianapolis and watched the show. My husband and I were just spectators and were on the outside. They had this great big dog and put him up Winners Dog. I thought, "Oh, my." He had fantastic ears. Back then, they called the veterinarian when anything like that happened. They called the veterinarian and the measuring committee. Back then they did not have a height for males. The judge saw me standing outside the ring and recognized me. He came out and said, "Don't you have Snowdrift Kennels?" I said, "I do," and he said, "What do you think about that dog?" I said, "He's too big. I'm going to tell you one thing, you're wasting your time, because unfortunately, we do not have a measurement in our Sammies. That

dog is probably 25 inches or more." So the dog was disqualified. He was the biggest one I believe I've seen in my life. He was a pretty dog other than ear size. I appreciated the judge asking me what I thought. I just told him the fact that we didn't have any measurements for the Sammies at that time. They did come up with one after that, and I'm glad. We can eliminate some of these big monsters that they were putting up in the past. They can't do it anymore, because somebody can call "Foul!" and then they will be measured.

Do you think that champions should be speciated, and did you special your champions?

Oh, yes, definitely.

To be continued ...