

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

Fall 1994 • \$12



Ch. Sitka's Mardi Gras

Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks With
Bob and Wanda Krauss
K-WAY
Poynette, Wisconsin

Part II

This interview was conducted at the home of Bob and Wanda Krauss in June of 1992 by Judy Mears.

Bob: People who have instant success become instant experts and they stop learning. The worst thing that can happen to you is to become too successful early on before you have been tempered by reality. I feel sorry for those people who have had reality hit them in the face a time or two, and it forces them out before they really had a chance at success. It works the other way, too. At least those people are not causing terribly much damage to the breed, but those people who are successful, and stop learning and continue, are really damaging, because they start to influence other newcomers to the breed and spread lots of misinformation.

Wanda: It was interesting seeing that in doing the original pedigree book. There would be a line that would come up and produce a lot of champions. A few of those were bred, nothing seemed to come out of those, and here you had this big explosion and it all kind of crumpled. Then you will see people who go along who produce a champion now and then for twenty years. Sometimes, someone will come to us and say, "I've got this bitch. How should I breed her to get what I want?" They'll tell you what they want and sometimes I can tell them about a dog that I think will do that for them. But sometimes I will tell them, "If I were you and wanted to go where you want to go, I wouldn't start from where you are now." (laughter) There have certainly been successful people who haven't started from where they are now. One of the most impressive stories I've ever heard was that Doris McLaughlin started three times. Her third set of stock was very successful, but she didn't stick with the first two, she made three tries.

Bob: And she was smart enough to know when to cut her losses and start over again.

Please describe, in general terms, your interpretation of the perfect Samoyed.

Wanda: Look at the drawing that I put on my business card. That was the best version, within my limits of artistic ability,

of the dog I wanted.

Bob: You will never see that dog in person, because he is really trotting with his head carriage way too high and his neck too long. He's a little stylized, but not too much. The other thing you have to consider when you talk about the perfect Sam is all these other qualities that we have mentioned. I don't think you can really describe a perfect Sam without mentioning one or two hundred other things.

Wanda: Basically, everything we've talked about so far goes into the best dog. I sort of thought about if I could count 1,000 points - this was before the 1,000 points of light - that I wanted to specify, I don't think I could yet get everything I wanted.

How should a dog move in the front and from the side?

Wanda: Freely, easily, efficiently. Specifically, front and rear should look like he's walking on a tightrope with a slant down from the body, slant into a single line, no flipping, turning, twisting, winging, paddling or anything out of that straight forward line, front or rear. From the side, he needs to drop his head a little bit to get full extension in the front, because that shifts his center of gravity forward, but even in that head extended position, his front leg at a trot should touch the ground as close to his nose as possible, at least under the eye, as a minimum. The pendulum swing of both front and rear should be the same, equal. There are dogs that do more reach than follow through. There are dogs that spend more of their stride in the follow through than the reach. We don't think of reach in the rear, but there is one, as much as there is in the front.

Each set of diagonal legs, a left front and right rear, and a right front and left rear, should move forward at the same time, parallel with one another. That's hard to envision if you don't understand about trotting horses and diagonals. When one front shoulder rises and the leg comes forward, the rear leg on the opposite side should be coming forward at the same time. The place that the front paw vacates should be the same place that the hind foot goes down into. Tennessee Walking horses overstep by eighteen inches. A dog that doesn't have enough drive or angulation sometimes doesn't even come up to where the front foot was.

We don't see a lot of rears that don't go far enough. We see lots of rears that overstep. If the front foot is still down and the rear foot has no place to go, there will be all kinds of maneuvers to try to avoid

stepping on oneself. I have a bitch that does a perfect single-track, and a number of people have asked me how I taught her to go down and back so straight. (laughter) I said, "Well, first you breed one that can and then you don't mess her up." Rear, the same as front. The forward reach should be about equal with the rear stride. You are only transmitting power when a foot is on the ground, so you need a little follow through as momentum, but there is no point in putting follow through out in the rear if the foot is off the ground.

You want the feet fairly low to the ground, the body should not flex any more than necessary, the tail may rise a little from the back, especially if the dog is pulling something. A dog that is pulling something will probably have his tail quite gay, but if he's just gaiting freely, it should be over his back. Where our standard says that the tail should be seen over the back once, it should also say it can be seen down occasionally. Originally, our tails were like the Siberians' are now and the Siberians' were something further back. If the tip of the tail touches the back, that's probably pretty well tight enough. You get a lot of strange constructions in the pelvis, and so on, if the tail is too tight. It isn't the tail, per se, that they should be looking at, but the clues it gives you to what else is going on there. That's probably true of most any individual part. You need to know what it's connected to, what it influences, and what hints it can give you.

How should a dog move from the rear going away at a slow trot?

Wanda: Different dogs come into a single-track at different speeds, and I don't know of any particular reason to have a preference for coming in earlier or later. I want a straight column of support. Like I said, a V onto a tightrope. When they are actually pulling, they may straddle out. When they are looking around, turning, doing anything other than anticipating going ahead for a number of feet, the rears may do lots of different things because they are trying to balance their weight and prepare to do something. In both front and rear, you can see a lot of strange things going on, and if you do it in a movie, where you can go back and look at what the dog was doing, he was looking at something over there, or he was preparing for the turn that's coming up ten feet down, or something. People talk about dogs crossing over. I don't know that I've ever seen a dog crossing over, either front or rear, unless they were looking around, shifting to do some-

thing else. They can get very narrow, very close. You have to set up the other conditions properly before you argue about whether the rear is doing things right.

Bob: What some people call crossing over is really sidwinding or crabbing. The reason sidwinders are crossing over is for a dynamic balance so they can keep moving forward rather than sideways. They have to get their foot under their center of gravity, and that's going to move it off to the side because they aren't moving straight ahead. One other thing you should pay attention to when the dog is coming towards you is looking at the rear. That sounds kind of weird, but you should also look at the front when the dog is moving away from you. If the dog has true movement, you will not be able to see the opposite set of legs either between or outside the ones that are closest to you.

You can tell a lot about how a dog is accommodating himself to certain faults. If, for instance, you see the rear legs outside the front legs, you might figure the dog is being moved too fast and is overstepping coming towards you. Then you would pay attention to that same dog on the side gait to see if he oversteps. If he oversteps on the side gait when he is moving slowly, it is probably a serious fault of some sort, or if he does it only when he is being moved too fast, faster than he can comfortably trot.

Wanda: Many people tend to move their dogs too fast, and different dogs will do different things in compensation, but all of them are really compensation, and handlers ought to slow them down to let them do what they naturally do before saying they are doing this, that or the other thing. Anything that puts energy in a different direction than straight ahead wastes some.

Bob: One good example of this is dogs that have a steep shoulder, for instance. Generally, what that means is the force of the stride is going to be transmitted in the vertical rather than in the horizontal, and that some of that energy will have to be dissipated in the shoulders and in the muscles. What you are going to see when the dog is moving towards you is that the head will be bouncing up and down a little and you will see the nose move. If you look at the dog from the side, you will see the back moving up and down, as well. You will see more compression in the pasterns, perhaps. You will notice that the tail is bouncing a little more. A lot of these things you can see just by looking at the topline, but you have to be very careful that you don't get fooled by the fact that the dog's coat may be bouncing while the rest of the dog is perfectly still; that what you are seeing is just hair moving rather than the actual body of the dog.

The other thing that you should pay attention to on the side gait is the ease and flow with which a dog moves. A well built dog that has no structural problems and is



Ch. K-Way's Magic Amulet CD.

moving efficiently will appear to think himself from one stride to the next. This dog will sort of move effortlessly around the ring. If you are working the dog on a leash, and you are moving along with one of those dogs, it will feel as if you are holding a leash and there is nothing on the end of it, it's just hanging down next to your side.

Wanda: I had a handler take one of my dogs one time. It was one of these little harnesses when a stiffened leash was popular, and he said, "That's what it felt like. All I had was a leash. I didn't have dog here." I said, "That's a good description." I don't know how else to say that - that it's a dog that is smooth and easy.

Bob: If you are familiar with horses, you know the difference between a light contact rein, and a horse that you really have to put a lot of pressure on the snaffle in order to get the head in and work the horse up on the bit. A dog is very similar in that regard. If a dog is built well and moves well, you need a very light hand on the leash. If a dog is not built well, you get a lot of forces, stresses and excess movement moving up the leash, and you feel more weight on your arm. The dog pulls more. With each stride, you can feel your arm moving up and down a quarter of an inch, but with a really well built dog, you don't

feel that. That's one of the very good indicators of side gait, just how the dog feels moving with you.

What are you looking for in a head?

Wanda: There should be a 50-50 relationship between the muzzle and the skull. That's important because in the arctic, these dogs had to warm the air so they didn't get frostbitten lungs. The junction between the skull and the muzzle should be quite smooth in a tapered effect rather than an acute "This is attached to that." They are all of a piece.

Bob: By that we mean that the stop should be as much hair as skull. People sometimes get confused. They think if you want a well defined stop you have to have the skull coming down at right angles to the muzzle. That isn't the best design.

Wanda: The depth of the muzzle should not be more than the width of the muzzle, but it frequently is, even in these really wide-headed dogs. The muzzle should come well out to the end of the nose. Sometimes you see dogs that look like they have a nose on the end of their muzzle, and some where it just fills out completely. You should be able to see a little bit of underjaw below the lip line, but, again, it comes clear out to the end and stops rather than slipping back. The almond eyes, well sloped. We

had never paid much attention to eyes until we had Omen. Since then, I want everybody to have those.

Bob: The outside edge of the eye should point back to the lower base of the ear.

Wanda: The ear should fold down to just touch the outside corner of the eye. It doesn't count if they go all the way across the eye to the inside corner, although some of them do. (laughter)

Bob: We heard that Agnes Mason used to have long eared dogs, and the way she would get around that problem was to put three fingers under the ear so she would have to have the ear cross all those fingers in order to get it to meet the outside corner of the eye. (laughter)

Wanda: The ear should be fully upright, not set out to the side like a Malamute or close together like a Siberian.

Bob: There are an awful lot of earsets that are too wide these days. That detracts as much from the appearance of the dog as the eyes and the muzzle.

Wanda: To be absolutely ideal, the dog should have very dark pigment, depending on age. If the dog is older than four or five and is still jet black, I might suspect there was some paint involved or tattooing or something, because they change seasonally and with age. I'd rather see a solid brown than breaks in a good black color. How much break is acceptable is an individual thing. I don't like to see more than an inch anywhere, or, better, half an inch.

Bob: The problem with lip breaks is not only that it detracts somewhat, but that it also tends to proliferate. If you don't breed against it, the breaks will get bigger. Consequently, it needs to be one of the things you mildly select for when you are choosing your breeding stock. You want to make sure you don't breed a dog with lip breaks to a bitch with lip breaks.

Wanda: It has to be an awfully uniform litter before we look at lip break as a deciding point.

What about a snow nose?

Wanda: It's fine with me.

What about breaks in the eye rims?

Wanda: It tends to make the dog's expression foreign. I don't think it's very important, because it's just a matter of a pinto spotting effect, having the spots in the right place to put the black pigment where the eyes are. I've seen dogs that have all kinds of black inside the mouth and then a big chunk of the lip line is pink. There are separate genes between the lip lines, the noses and the eye rims.

Bob: They don't seem to be correlated at all. We've found that broken eye rims don't breed as true as broken lip lines. We haven't seen enough of them that I can state that as a general principle for all Sams in all bloodlines. This is what I mean when I say

you need to reevaluate things every few years as new information comes along.

Wanda: The other thing is that a lot of this information applies to our bloodlines, the specific ages that we evaluate, and may not be true for somebody else. A couple of times we've evaluated puppies that were an outcross from our line on somebody else's, and they don't always do things the same ages that ours do.

Do you prefer parallel planes to the head?

Wanda: I very seldom have seen them. If you get all the hair down on the skull, there's a little break that the back of the skull is five or ten degrees off from parallel to the muzzle.

Bob: Yes, or it's slightly dome shaped. Certainly, you wouldn't want things to be as parallel as a Collie. That gives you entirely the wrong feel for the dog.

Wanda: Since the Canadian standard came out with the parallel planes, I've looked a lot and I don't find many when I get my hands on them. A lot of them look it, but not very many of them feel it.

What about fill under the eye?

Wanda: That's part of what I was saying about how they taper. That's the bone under the eye, and the bone that holds the teeth, and you want a fair amount of that base bone, because you are talking about a dog that is going to chew on bones for fifteen years and run into bushes, corners and tree stumps - and any other stupid thing they can manage to run into! (laughter) You'd rather they not poke their eye out.

Bob: You have to make a distinction between the fill under the eye, which are the bones, and the droopy flews, which are too much skin. Often, you can misidentify one for the other. You really ought to get your hands on the dog to make sure what you are feeling is what you are looking at.

How serious are missing teeth in the breed?

Bob: A minor problem.

Wanda: I've seen dogs with broken off teeth, and dogs with pulled out teeth, and dogs who stick their teeth through grate wires, and so on, but I don't know that I've ever seen a dog that is actually missing the tooth bud.

Bob: I may have seen one in twenty years.

I've seen missing premolars. Most people don't count those premolars. But if you really look at them, very often you see one missing or there is an extra one.

Bob: Okay, we're going to have to go back and count because I've just been looking for gaps. That may be why I've seen so few. See, I've learned something. By talking with a knowledgeable person, I've gained a piece of information that I have not been aware of for twenty years. (laughter)

Wanda: I know that the two lower central incisors sometimes get smaller as you get into a narrower head.

How important is eye color?

Wanda: It should be a dark brown, a warm brown. I prefer that to an actual black. There are a fair number of too light eyes, and some yellow eyes that give a really harsh expression.

Bob: It makes them look more like a Siberian. To my way of thinking, a Sam, because of its people orientation, ought to have a very warm, pleasant eye.

If you could rate the whole dog on a point scale of 100, how many points should the head be assigned?

Bob: I don't grade dogs on the basis of how many points for this or that. I look at the overall dog and sort of grade it on a scale of one to ten. Most Sams tend to fall around five or six.

Wanda: We once had a judge do the Milwaukee specialty who literally gave the dogs a grade, and you had to be an A to win the class, and you had to be a B or a C to get a ribbon. He had a Bred-by-Exhibitor class that had an A and the rest were Ds - a first and nothing else. He had an American Bred that was literally a bunch of Bs, and I think he gave a third and fourth out of eight dogs or something like that. He caused lots of controversy.

Bob: You might say the head is worth ten or fifteen percent, but if I had a dog that was beautiful all over and had a really lousy head that I had to give a zero on, I don't think I could live with it. It's a touchy question.

Wanda: It depends on how you assign the points, too.

Bob: If you are going to assign ten or fifteen points to the head, how much do you assign to the ears, the eyes, the muzzle? The really important thing is not necessarily what shape the muzzle is, but how it relates to everything else. If it's a little too high, or too low, but it's not in proportion to the rest of the skull ...

Wanda: And there can be dogs where all the pieces seem to be okay, but it doesn't come together in a nice expression.

Bob: Yes, there isn't any one thing you would be able to pick up as being wrong with a dog, but you say it is a very unpleasant head.

Wanda: So, it's not high on our list. (laughter)

What causes a snow nose or winter nose?

Wanda: I suspect there may be something to do with vitamins, minerals and ultraviolet exposure. Obviously, part of it's genetic, because there are dogs that do stay black forever, although I see less of them than there used to be. There was a very fine-boned, dead white coat, perfectly black pigment, and I think that dog is pretty well gone in the breed. I knew a bitch that was still jet black at twelve. I wouldn't have taken the rest of her for anything, but her nose was still black at twelve.

What should the relationship of chest depth be

to the rest of the dog?

Bob: The standard has it pretty well set up that it should be 55 percent of the height at the elbows, or preferably even a half inch deeper than the elbows if you can get it. I would rather have a chest that was slightly deeper than a chest that was too shallow. If your chest is up too high, the elbows aren't held in proper position with the muscles and tend to flop around, make a dog toe in and out and be a little loose in front.

Wanda: Particularly young dogs.

Bob: Yes. However, if you are working a dog on a sled and doing a lot of pulling, that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Do most dogs have honest elbow/chest depth?

Wanda: We range from 50-50, and there is not much over 55. A lot of the variation we see is coat, not body. We look for something in the chest that I can only describe as "elbow pockets." There should be a flattening of the ribs in the area where the elbows are applied to the chest that makes a rounded and then a flattened area, and then a little extra muscle underneath that.

Bob: If you can think of it in terms of a cross section, the chest is shaped rather like a keyhole. The important thing is that the chest is somewhat rounded up high, and then it begins to go sideways inward, and flattens out in an almost vertical direction right where the elbows are. The purpose of this is to allow the elbows freedom to move forward and backward without having to go in and out, because your rib cage widens out as you go towards the rear. If you didn't have this little pocket for the elbows, they would have to move outward as the dog's elbow comes back, and that would mean that the dog's foot on the ground would have to rotate, and you would have a little friction at the pads, and more twist and shock that has to be absorbed in the pastern or else the pads would tend to scrape on the ground and run themselves raw while the dog was moving. Neither of those two things is desirable; they waste energy and are inefficient.

Wanda: We've seen very good moving dogs who don't have elbow pockets, but the very best moving dogs we've seen have them.

Bob: You will see a lot of dogs that tend to toe in when their weight is fully on the front foot. That ordinarily means that the elbow is moving out. If they don't have these elbow pockets, the rib cage is a little too wide, and, as a result, the stress is in the wrong place and people usually say these animals are toeing in. But they are toeing in because their rib cage is not properly shaped, and not because there is something wrong in the leg. Likewise, the same thing can be true if they are toeing out. Usually, when you see toeing out, it's in a young dog when he's reaching forward and the foot is

still off the ground. That is generally because the rib cage does not come far enough forward. What we like to see between the legs is an extension of the breastbone so that it comes out about an inch ahead of the front of the shoulder blade. What this means is the rib cage is far enough forward that the elbows do not move in when fully extended. The same principle holds there. If your toe is out when the foot hits the ground, then you have the rotation that has to be accommodated for somewhere inside the foot, and you are going to rub the pads raw or apply

know where it went. (laughter)

Bob: One thing I could add to that is that occasionally when a dog looks bad it just isn't feeling good on a particular day, and it could flop around simply because the dog isn't pulling itself together and isn't feeling alert and cheerful. You can see something that might look like a structural fault when it really isn't.

All you need to see is one or two steps on a dog like that, and you can see there is nothing physically wrong with it. With a dog that is tired and beat at the end of a long season, or feeling a little bit sick or



Ch. K-Way Tabor. No Editing Needed.

too much stress to the pasterns and the dog will get tired sooner, and you don't have efficient movement.

Wanda: These things may be potentially present in puppies, and if they are too heavy, too skinny, exercised too little, or not allowed to play, they don't develop properly. We have it potentially, but we lose it in a lot of the fine details. I've been to every National Specialty since 1970, and you will see the same dog year after year. Some dogs are in really good condition, and move very straight front and rear. Some years they are in poorer condition, and you see shakes, rattles and rolls. You have to look at a dog a number of times with, preferably, long time spans in between. There was another point to that, but I don't

under the weather, it's a little difficult to tell. In a case like that, a dog may lose simply because this wasn't its day.

Wanda: We see, a lot of times, the day after a regional specialty, that both the dogs and the people look like they are hung over. They are just plain tired and not able to get it together that day.

Bob: It's very interesting. You can see the same thing in a long sequence of shows, too, if you have four or five shows in a row, that dogs will have their ups and downs. The first couple of days, a couple of particular dogs may do all the winning, and then they just kind of fade to the back and somebody else comes up and wins on day three. Then the dog that won on day three looks poor on day four and somebody else comes

along. It's very rare that one dog in an entry will stand out for four or five days in a row, no matter how good they may have looked on day one.

Has it been your experience that coat is very important to winning?

Wanda: Unfortunately, yes.

Bob: There seem to be very few people who are willing to put up a dog with a severe lack of coat, even in late spring or early summer when dogs are consistently out of coat, or at least males are. There are a lot of judges who just will not put up a dog that is out of coat. I really can't see any good reason for that, because I don't think coat is really all that important year-round as a measure of a dog's quality.

Wanda: As long as you can tell there is an undercoat and an outer coat, you really ought not to need any more than that.

Bob: Moreover, you can tell the quality of the outer coat even if the dog doesn't have very much undercoat. You can tell what the texture is like, and if you've seen enough dogs in full coat, you will know what the dog would look like in full coat. Judges ought to make more allowances for that.

Wanda: One of the wins I felt was the biggest compliment was the last show Janet Heffington judged before she died. She put up my bitch for Winners Bitch that was just totally out of coat. The only reason I showed her was that it was the local show and my mother, my mother's friend, the dog-sitter and half of the Samoyed club that doesn't show were there to see what a show was like. She shows lovely, so I took her in even though she had dropped her coat. Janet put her up and said, "I could tell that she had some undercoat and some outer coat - not very much of either - but I'd take this one home with me." I said, "To me, that's a real compliment."

Bob: It's rather interesting that in the last few years, people are talking more about coat than they used to. It wasn't a big deal in the early '70's - in fact, a lot of our early dogs did not have a great deal of coat; they had a short working coat, or more of this shawl type coat structure. We did quite well with them. Then we discovered that it became harder and harder to win with that type of dog, because the new style was to get as much coat as possible, even though it was a little droopy and not of a particularly good texture. In order to maintain our competition with these other dogs, we had to add a little more coat to our dogs. That's one of the main reasons we bred to Main Man, to get a little more profuse coat and to get a little more of the dark pigment, two characteristics which that line was particularly dominant for. And, we got it. But I've noticed as time has gone on now, the last ten or fifteen years, people are paying more and more attention to coat. I think the texture has gotten better.

Wanda: I don't.

Bob: But the profuseness of coat has gotten to the point where a lot of the dogs would not be able to work without getting overheated or develop snowballs and other things on the hair while they were working.

Wanda: A lot of the coats these days people are putting a lot of stuff in. If they didn't, you would see how well they drooped.

Bob: That may well be the case. You can alter the texture of the coat and make it feel coarser by putting things in it.

What do you think of biscuit or cream colored Samoyeds?

Wanda: It shouldn't make a difference. If there are judges for whom it does make a difference, they are dead wrong. The actual texture of the hair is much better in the cream and biscuit hairs.

Bob: Most of the droopy coats come in the whiter variety. I'm not sure of the reason, but I think there may be some genetic correlation there, that as you breed toward a more profuse and whiter coat, you tend to get the droopier outer coat that goes with it.

Wanda: But that doesn't make sense according to that article that came out of England in the '30's that said you had to keep some biscuit in order to keep your pigment.

Some of the poorest pigment I've seen have been very biscuit dogs.

Wanda: Yes. I don't know how that particular correlation got completely reversed between the '30's and us here and now.

Bob: My suspicion is that if you do try to breed for all white dogs, you may eventually lose your pigment, but what the early English breeders were trying to tell us is that there is a large number of different genes involved, and we can't afford to breed too intensely in any one direction without losing one or two of the more important ones.

Wanda: There are at least three different genetic whites in Samoyeds. There's the spotting gene, the same gene that makes the white Collies with the dark heads, and then there's an extension gene that makes the white all over, and we have all of them. We don't do anything in terms of registering the dogs in a way that would tell us anything. They have recently removed biscuit as one of the choices you are allowed to list in the color of your Samoyed, and I write it in anyway and they put it in. The black points that they still allow are not true. The points are those spots on the Doberman that are brown, the eye pips, the lower legs, the vent in the rear. I have a number of pictures of Samoyeds that look rather like that, after they've been playing in the mud. (laughter) But I've never seen a Samoyed that is white with black points - and clean.

Bob: White with muddy points. Very

common in the breed. (laughter)

Do you ever see a dog with a true 45-degree layback?

Wanda: I believe so. We know of one female that we are pretty sure was. We'd gone over her at different times with intervals of months in between. I don't know that I've ever seen it in a male. I've seen males that are close.

Is it something that can be bred for, and should our standard remain with the 45-degree layback?

Wanda: The terminology "45 degrees" may or may not actually be what's there, but the implication that we should breed for as much layback as we can keep is right on the button.

Bob: It's an ideal to shoot for. As such, it's important to remember that, even though most Sams might have 40 or 41 degrees instead of 45.

Do you think the corresponding return of upper arm is as important as the layback of the shoulder?

Bob: Absolutely.

Wanda: Actually, I think the relationship between them is the most important. We had a bitch that truly had 90 degrees between her shoulder and upper arm. The shoulder was probably only 41, so the upper arm was a little steeper than 45, but the 90 degrees between them existed and she moved very well. That front we still find occasionally. I'll take that front over one that has less angulation between top and bottom.

Bob: One thing I have felt the breed has been losing over the last few years is the length in the upper arm. We would like to see it at least as long as the shoulder blade.

Wanda: We argue whether longer is better. I think they should be equal and he says longer is better.

Bob: I wouldn't mind seeing it a half inch longer on an adult, but in any event, we both agree that shorter than the shoulder blade is not a good thing, and the tendency seems to be producing shorter upper arms again these days.

Wanda: Again, that was one of the really predominant faults in the breed before Omen, and Omen had a very strong influence to equalize them, and we can still see that several generations down from him in other people's stock that just outcrossed to him once. Now we are seeing a fair number of shorter upper arms coming back.

What is the ideal croup drop-off?

Bob: Thirty degrees. It's really surprising how much difference it makes if the croup is too shallow or too steep. It really affects the dog's ability to drive and power the animal and move through the front. If the croup is too shallow, say around 20 or 25 degrees, the dog will exhibit a large amount of follow through, the foot will leave the ground and still continue moving toward the rear. It can come out a long

ways, it's a lot of wasted effort ...

Wanda: It's very flashy.

Bob: Yes. But what it means is that the dog is going to have to work harder and apply more energy to pull that whole hind leg forward so that it hits the ground at the right time as the opposite front foot. You have to continue applying power to pull all of that back forward where it should be again when it hits the ground on the next step, so there is a lot of wasted effort there. The other extreme is to have a 40-degree slope to the croup, which generally leads to a poorer tailset which is not quite as loose. It also means the dog has a tendency to reach further forward with the rear legs, interfere with the front, and the dog will compensate either by crabbing or shortening up the strides so that the interference doesn't occur. In either case, you have a dog that looks poor coming and going or looks poor from the side.

Wanda: A lot of times you will see that dog, shortly after its foot is off the ground, snatch it straight up in the air and move it forward again - sort of like watching a sewing machine needle.

Bob: The reason for that is obvious. The dog can't extend too much in the rear. The croup is sloped so that the joint doesn't open much further toward the rear. In order to keep from being very painfully stressed in the hip joint, the dog has to quickly lift it off the ground and move it forward.

Wanda: We are also seeing a fair number of dogs that don't open their hock joint. It just goes back and forth.

Bob: It's a short stride, plus vertical motion, and you are going up and down like a sewing machine or a bicycle. It's hard to diagnose sickle hocks without actually putting your fingers on the dog's hock and pushing it forward to see how it extends. A dog may just have a steep croup and looked like it is sickle hocked. A dog could also have sickle hocks and have a perfectly normal croup, in which case you will see no extension, and the dog will have to lift its foot off the ground sooner, because it's stressing the hock joint rather than the hip joint that I mentioned earlier. One of the things that ought to ring a bell in your head is when you see a hock joint not flex and the foot come off the ground too quickly. The rear leg should extend in the rear at the same angle the front leg is extending toward the rear and they should both come forward and hit the ground when they are at the same angle, too. Double jointed hocks are the opposite fault, where the hock joint opens too far - past 180 degrees.

Wanda: When we used to look at super eight-millimeter movies, we had a particularly good projector, and one of the things we found was the best moving dogs had their foot on the ground, either front or

rear, for a count of five frames. If they were shorter strided, sometimes it was four and sometimes it was three.

Please describe the ideal topline.

Wanda: That's not something we usually talk about much. (laughter)

Bob: Start at the top of the head, I suppose. You should have a nice, level muzzle, maybe pointed slightly down. Then, from the back of the head, you should see a nice arch going into the withers, sort of like a very shallow S. You don't want to see the neck rising too vertically out of the withers because that generally indicates that you have steep shoulders and maybe a short upper arm that goes along with it. The muscles tend to be shorter, because the bones are shorter, and, therefore, the neck has to shorten up, too.

Wanda: The neck should be long enough to bring the muzzle above the backline, so you are looking at the head, muzzle, backline.

Bob: When the dog is moving fast, it will tend to lower its head so that it's in dynamic balance with the feet and the head will be carried forward. The nice thing about a good arch of neck is the dog has more freedom to use the head for balance when moving fast or moving slow. When moving at a slow trot, the dog can carry its head high and neck arched and it looks really elegant. A short neck, or a neck that rises too high out of the withers is going to detract from the appearance of the dog as

well as its ability to move well, change direction quickly - that sort of thing.

Wanda: The standard talks about a level back but the withers should be higher than the croup. The muscles and everything builds up over the top of the spine, and those spines are longer, so you want some increase of height above where the croup is.

Bob: What you would like to see is not a swayback, but a gentle curve, the bottom of the S I was talking about. It goes back from the withers to the back. The back ought to be reasonably level, maybe slightly rising toward the croup, not so much that the dog is curved like a hound - you don't want that much of a rise in the back. There should be a slow rise toward the croup that doesn't have any muscling on it but is just bone. It's going to be slightly lower than the withers, maybe.

Wanda: The loin section you want fairly short because that's an unsuspended bridge. You want a lot of muscle through there, and that's where you measure between the stifle, when the dog is standing, and the end of the ribs. I like to have a hand with my fingers a little spread in there. The croup is also where we "weigh" the dog, because there is bone sticking up on the top of the croup with nothing in between there in the way of muscles. What's in that dish is fat and you want just about enough to level it off.

Bob: The other place to weigh the dog



Ch. K-Way's Disco Dancer.

is at the ribs. You should be able to count the ribs with your fingers. But there ought to be enough substance to the dog that you can feel muscling in the loin that is reasonably firm. The dog ought not to be so skinny that you can feel the ribs with very little muscling in the loins, and it feels weak and you can wobble it from side to side very easily when you put your hands on the dog. This is part of the conditioning that I was talking about earlier with Connie. In order to give her a firm loin, she had to get a certain amount of roadwork.

Wanda: The tail comes basically up at the end of the spine. In actuality, if you took all the muscles out, it comes out and then curves up. But at the end of the body, it comes up. It should come back down to touch the body. It can either touch the body and stay as an arch, or come a little further down in a nice sweep. Probably the most ideal look is where it curves down and makes a line that circles right around with the stifle, so it's all one curve.

Bob: It curves up over the body and you can draw an arc from the base of the tail bone around to the front and back underneath along the stifle.

Wanda: Just slightly oval-shaped from the rear end.

Bob: But you have to remember that a lot of that is hair and the actual physical end of the tail is down just below the top of the back. People have a tendency to think that if a little bit of curve is good, a lot of curve is better and they breed for tight tails.

Wanda: Besides, they are so much easier in the showing.

Bob: True, you don't have to worry about the tail going down in the showing. What you are doing is breeding in a fault so your dog will look normal and showy in the ring.

Wanda: Eventually, if you keep that up, you can come up with bent tails, double hooked tails and lots of funny little tails. Most of it is covered up with hair and people don't ever see it.

Bob: The other extreme is not a dog that carries its tail down sometimes, but a gay tail, a tail that is carried straight up in the air and actually leaves the back. Most of the time that can be due to two problems, either a steep croup or a tail that is a little too short. The steep croup is easily determinable just by feeling for the point of the hips on top of the croup. The length of the tail can be measured by pulling it down toward the hock. A tail that is the proper length will actually touch the hock joint. The tip of the tail bone will touch the hock.

Wanda: And then you have to talk about how long the hock should be. It should be about 30 percent of the height of the dog. We used to have something that was really neat. We'd have these evaluation clinics where we had either breeders and/or Working Group type people – the

more knowledgeable about structure, the better – come in and actually grade the dogs piece by piece and talk to the people. They would occasionally say, "It's a nice pet, but it's a pet." They would give people an idea of where their dog could be improved and what they should be looking for. At the time we were doing it, it was usually pretty well accepted, but I don't know whether it would be anymore. One time, we had Nancy Russell judge, and she was apparently used to much longer hocks in Malamutes, and she kept wanting to know why they were all so short. (laughter)

Bob: You can tell what a lot of angulation does to hocks by looking at very young puppies, say seven, eight or nine weeks old, that have a lot of angulation. They don't have very strong hocks, and occasionally look cow hocked when they move away from you. The reason is, with all that angulation, long muscles, long ligaments, and long bones, they don't have enough strength in that joint to hold it solid when they move. It's not at all surprising that if you want a long hock and still keep it strong, you have to cut down on the angulation. More design constraints! (laughter)

Wanda: As you look at the difference between breeds, or some of the differences between dogs of the same breed, the interesting thing is that when you change one thing, there are three or four other things that change. That's how I got thinking about the effect of the muzzle and the flews and all with shortening of the muzzle. It's true in a lot of other places, too.

What's the ideal ear and earset?

Wanda: We did that.

Bob: The illustrated standard shows it very well. There's not much more that needs to be said about it.

What's the ideal foot?

Wanda: Thick pad, relatively long toes with lots of arch, with SHORT toenails. (laughter) I don't know why in this breed so many people, even knowledgeable people, do not cut their dogs' toenails off shorter. The tendons that hold everything together will simply stretch if the nails are too long, and you can't have a tight foot with long toenails. The length of the toes give more purchase and more push than the little round cat foot.

Many people trim feet entirely wrong. I've seen everything from all the hair scissored out and the toenails hanging out (laughter), to this big round poof, trying to make it into a cat foot, which is extremely successful when it is already a cat foot. It goes with fence post legs, too, I think. When you turn it over and look at it, which you see very few judges do, there shouldn't be big spaces in there amongst things, because you want it all nice and tight. You don't want to get the snow up in there and cut the skin and make the dogs lame.

Bob: If there are any spaces, they

ought to be filled with very coarse hair so that it will shed snow and ice easily. If you hear the dog moving on a hard surface, say on your kitchen linoleum, and it goes clickity, clickity, click, the nails are too long. They need to be shortened. Tap your fingernails on a table and see how long you can tolerate that before it starts hurting. The other thing is a lot of people keep their dogs in kennels on concrete. If a dog is constantly on a surface where the nails are lengthening out the tendons and ligaments and making the toes lose their arch, you are going to have flat feet.

Cutting the toenails is the most important thing, but even having dogs on concrete all the time is also bad. They ought to have a chance to be on a natural surface or on gravel, where the toes can accommodate themselves to different changes of surface, to rough and smooth surfaces, to have a chance to massage the toes by having them step on different stones and accommodating to different slopes as the dog moves. That keeps the toes strong, keeps the muscles and ligaments bending the right way. It moves the stresses around so the foot can remain limber and accommodate itself to different types of ground surface, to rock, sand and grass, for instance. All of these things are important if you want to maintain a dog in good working condition.

The trouble is, many people pay very little attention to the feet because they are used so little in our Sams today. They are only used for getting up and going to the food dish and then walking back to the couch. (laughter) If your dog has to go out and work in a field or work on a sled, you better have a good foot or your dog is going to break down. The people who work their dogs regularly in herding trials and on sled teams know this, and they pay a lot of attention to feet. Unfortunately, show people pay very little attention to feet. It's almost as if the feet are a part of the dog they don't need to worry about, as long as it holds them up. As a result, since people don't pay attention to feet, they don't breed for them either. You see an awful lot of flat feet in the ring, and nobody seems to care. My only hope is that if there are enough good feet in the breed, that if people aren't selecting for them, they at least won't select against them.

What's the most serious fault in the breed today, and what's the most common fault in the breed today?

Wanda: I think for right now we can say the eye problems are the most serious, because there is not enough known about how they are inherited. There are inherited and noninherited problems that can be mistaken for one another. We can't get good descriptions from different ophthalmologists of the same thing, so they aren't giving us the same description of the same problem in different places. Breeders are only begin-

ning to share their information with other people. At this point, it's hard to figure out what may be related to what else, and it appears that a lot of these things are much more widespread than we thought they were. We're looking at several different diseases, some nonhereditary things, all jumbled up in one mass. It's confusing!

Bob: I agree. Our problems now are not what we see in the dogs, but what we can't see or know. The quality of dogs has improved quite a lot and you don't see terribly bad fronts and bad rears in Sams the way you used to. Heads need improvement. I really don't think there are any major structural problems that are dominant in the breed as a whole right now, so we ought to concentrate on those things that require more information and more cooperation between people. I hope our national breed club will be able to establish some sort of a genetic registry.

Wanda: You said that before.

Bob: It's going to become more and more important in the next few years – and it's important enough to say it twice. (laughter)

Wanda: As to what's common?

Bob: Heads or coats, Wanda, pick one. (laughter) And bad feet.

Wanda: Yes, bad feet, poor eye slants, bad lip lines, excessive coat, too fat dogs (laughter) – maybe I should just say education, because I feel that both the judges and the newcomers aren't getting what we learned. Granted, we went out and sought it, but I feel it's very important for us to try to pass it on.

Bob: These things tend to run in cycles. Once things become fashionable, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that the judge will put it up, because that's what the breeders keep bringing them, and the breeders keep breeding them because that's what the judges put up. Sometimes a breed can work itself into that sort of a cycle and it's kind of hard to get out of it. The way to get out of it is to educate both judges and breeders so they don't consider these things as important anymore.

Wanda: I don't think we see very many people who plan very far ahead in terms of if they breed their bitch to a dog, who are they going to take the daughters to? Who can I breed the sons to? Where can I pick up this or that characteristic?

Bob: You don't hear people talking about it much. What we hear at dog shows is, "I'm going to breed to this dog and have this great litter of champions."

Wanda: They think they can correct everything at once – forever – and it's never going to come back to haunt them. (laughter)

Bob: But we who have been around for a few years know that some ghosts do come back, you just don't know what!

Wanda: One of the ones we saw was



Ch. K-Way's Arrow of Destiny CD.

Saroma's Polar Prince, a dog who had some very outstanding characteristics. His rear, in particular, was much better than what you were seeing a lot of at the time. Everybody bred their bitches with shaky rears to his nice rear and got nice rears. Then they bred them back to the ones with the bad rears and the bad rears came back. When you bred a half brother/half sister, doubling on him, you were also doubling on his two mothers with bad rears. The problem was solved in one easy step until the next step came along.

Bob: Plan ahead! (laughter)

Is the standard a good one?

Bob: Absolutely. It's one of the best standards in existence.

Would you like to see anything changed?

Bob: No. I'm perfectly happy with the AKC not changing it for the next ten years. Any changes proposed are as likely to make the standard poorer as to improve it. We are better off leaving well enough alone. Let's not open up this can of worms.

Wanda: There are a few things I would like to see emphasized or defined or something like that, but that's not the kind of changes we are going to get if we change it.

Bob: There is a tendency to be fashionable when proposing changes to the standard. Ideas come and go, and as far as the

standard is concerned, I believe we ought to be very conservative. It's served us well for a long time.

Should there be any other disqualifications?

Bob: I don't see the need for any.

What's the ideal height for a dog and the ideal height for a bitch?

Wanda: I'd say probably 23 inches for a dog. The bigger you make them, the longer the levers are, and the more trouble they have keeping control of everything. One of the simplest ways to make a taller dog, if you want a taller dog, which lots of people do, is to straighten out the angles. Let's keep the angles bent.

Bob: And let's keep the dog small enough that they can remain agile and move around.

Wanda: When you talk to families and people, there is a real demand, a niche, for a 35-pound dog. If you think about the other breeds, there is not much in that range. As adults, we can easily say, "This one is a 35-pound bitch," but when it's six weeks old, we still can't tell you whether it's going to be a 35-pound bitch or a 40-pound bitch.

How many people say they want a bitch rather than a dog because they are smaller?

Bob: That's a very common thing.

Should champions be special?

Wanda: Some of them.

Bob: Most, not.

Wanda: One of the things that's very strange about this whole dog game is everybody can play and derive enjoyment doing what they want to do. For years and years, we finished dogs and didn't show a special, and we had any number of them that had gotten Group placements on their way to their championships, and, presumably, if they had been out and been specialized they would have done pretty well. But there is a big commitment to having a dog ready every time you take it into the ring. If you take a special into the ring when it isn't ready, shame on you.

I would like to see much more breadth of activity. Somebody takes the dog in obedience, somebody else in the family shows it in conformation, somebody takes it hiking, somebody does some weight pulling with it. You have a dog that's finished a championship. Go do something else with it instead of taking on another puppy. It's very easy to get too many dogs - it's real hard NOT to get too many dogs. (laughter) They have a right to have a life, and we control that life, so we ought to be looking at what we are doing.

Does making the Top Ten or Twenty mean anything?

Wanda: How much money you have to spend on the project? (laughter)

Bob: That seems to be the biggest criterion, because the only way you can get into the Top Ten or Top Twenty is to go to enough shows and be out there continually showing your dog. If you really want to play the game right and be noticed, you had best be out there with a well-known handler and do some advertising so that people know you are around, see you in a lot of Breeds, see you in the Group a lot. That tends to feed on itself, and the owner-handler who takes his special out to show twenty times a year is not going to do too much - certainly not get into the Top Ten.

Wanda: Oh, I don't know. Connie was in the Top Ten of bitches for three years with no more than twenty shows a year.

Bob: Twenty shows a year? That's only ten weekends, less than once a month.

Wanda: We end up making decisions about what show we are going to go to by who we will see there, where we can go out to eat ... (laughter)

Bob: It's a social event, and you bring a dog along just the same as you would pack certain clothes for a trip. (laughter)

Wanda: It's basically a floating crap game. We all get together in different towns every week. If you have a pretty good range from Minnesota to Indiana, you will see different people at them, but you will see a lot of the same people, too. It's the only activity I know of where the Little Leaguers compete with the professionals. Where else do you get the grade school

kids, the high school kids and the professionals playing basketball together? (laughter)

Bob: Yes, you can all play it at your own level and be reasonably happy. You can be in the classes if you want, you can show your special occasionally, you can owner-handle, you can hire a handler ...

Wanda: You can work in obedience for getting a leg, or you can go in obedience and work for a 200 score.

Would popularization help or harm the breed?

Wanda: Harm. We've stayed pretty stable.

Bob: If you look at any breed where the popularity has increased to any extent, the quality of the breed has gone down. The first thing to disappear is temperament. It's very difficult to recover from that, because once the breed has a bad reputation, then it takes a nosedive.

Wanda: When you read some of the descriptions of the Samoyed in some of these books that propose to tell you what different breeds are like, I think we're in trouble. And they are just as inaccurate with other breeds that I've known.

Is judging fair?

Wanda: Sometimes. It's always interesting to look back at a day's judging, and, as much as you can tell about the structure and so forth of the dogs, see if you can account for the way they were placed. As much as you can tell, what kind of condition were they in? As much as you can tell, what kind of coat were they in? A lot of times, that will tell you just as much or more as which ones were shown by the handler and which ones were shown by the exhibitor who always shows to that judge.

Bob: Things are certainly not as bad as all the carping after the judging would lead you to believe. (laughter) Yes, there is a certain amount of politics involved, and, yes, there are personalities and likes and dislikes and everything else, but, by and large, the majority of judges try to do a decent job. A lot of the motives that are ascribed to the judges and handlers after the judging are really just guesses or sour grapes.

What would you do to improve judging?

Wanda: If we could have more educational things - like the judges at the specialties and so on - even taking judges and dogs out on the trails to watch herding dogs, hunt behind dogs, take them to do the things. For the most part, judges who have actually done things with their breed, whatever it may be, probably have a better balanced look at their breed and other breeds.

Would you rather show under an all breed judge or a breeder-judge and why?

Wanda: I don't look at it that way.

Bob: Education is the key to making things better, and some breeder-judges and some all-rounders have the breadth and knowledge and understanding, and some do not. You learn after a while to stay away

from those who do not, just as you learn to stay away from judges who are too influenced by politics or faces. It's very easy, if you are observant, to recognize these things.

Do you think poor judging is more a result of politics or the fact that a lot of judges don't know the breed?

Wanda: I would say they don't know and don't have enough time to know. After 25 years of learning this one, I would hate to think that I had to go out and learn this much about 25 other breeds to judge the whole Working Group.

Bob: It's pretty clear that most of the judges do not have the depth of knowledge and understanding of a long-time breeder, and if you talk to most judges who have been around for a while, they will admit this. They will say they are often very eager to talk to established breeders and ask them questions. There often isn't very much time to do this, of course, at shows, because they are going through 175 dogs in a day.

Wanda: And another 175 the next day.

Bob: Probably all he wants is a hot bath to soak his tired feet and a place to curl up and sleep for a few hours.

Does advertising influence judges?

Wanda: Yup!

Bob: It let's them know who is around and who is winning. But the best advertising you can get is appearing regularly in the Group and placing. That's worth more than anything you can buy in the newspapers. Unfortunately, one usually leads to the other.

Wanda: A lot of judges don't really want to go out on a limb, so they will go with somebody they have seen around a lot, rather than a dog that is out for the first time as a special and may be really better just then.

Bob: That's some judges. Then you have other judges who are confident about what they are doing and take great pride in being the first to recognize a great dog that comes out of nowhere. You hear a lot of judges talking about that: "I discovered so-and-so." They take a lot of pride and pleasure out of doing something like that. "I gave him his first Group placement."

Is it ethical to retouch advertising photos?

Wanda: It depends on what you do with them.

Bob: For what purpose are they being used? What are you trying to hide?

Wanda: I have lots of photos where I'd like to have this part from this one and that part from that one. If you can manage to put them together for me with your airbrush, why, have at it. (laughter)

Do you always show your own dogs?

Wanda: Almost always.

Bob: Occasionally, a friend might show one of our dogs if we have too many at a show, or our schedule doesn't permit

one of us to go to a show. We feel we can comfortably show two dogs per person. Occasionally, one of us might show three, but that's pushing it.

Have you ever handled for other people as a favor or professionally?

Wanda: We've shown dogs that we've bred as a favor anytime, no charge. It's nice if they pay the entries. (laughter)

How do you train puppies and at what age?

Wanda: Puppies live in the house for the first six months and they all learn to be house dogs. We make a considerable effort to get them out and get them socialized, expose them to different noises, sights, and different things. The first time they are on leash is when we do the eight-week evaluation movies. Part of what that is, is not only how they move, but how they respond to the leash.

I take dogs for walks, do very little actual training, because one of the things I do very well, and like doing, is taking a puppy into the ring and coping and having it show just the right things at the right time, but not expecting them to stand stacked for any length of time, and so on. It's really easy to burn out puppies, and we end up teaching people how to train their puppies, but often they end up overdoing it. They are great match puppies, but then they get to be conformation age and they are sick of it all. Conformation is not very mentally stimulating to dogs.

We do a lot of our teaching to bait in groups in the kitchen, and they very quickly learn they must catch it out of the air, because if it hits the ground, somebody else is going to get it. (laughter) I like to teach them a stand/stay to where I can walk around them and look at them from different directions. If I've got that, and they can walk on a leash, I'm ready to go into the ring. But I guess I don't necessarily recommend that for other people.

Bob: Unless you like to cope.

Do you still do obedience training?

Wanda: Not much, but I'm really thinking I should get back into it. I have a dog that's basically all trained that we got back. His conformation will be much better if I do obedience with him first. I pulled him out of the car at a fun day at the Milwaukee club, and he heeled very nicely, and did everything except pay attention very well. He needed a few reminders on that subject, but he's pretty much got it down. I'm also very quick and dirty in obedience training. I do almost all the work on lead. I enter them soon after I start training them, so they don't ever have time to think of theme and variations, because Samoyeds are wonderful at theme and variations. I can get them through a show and have a CD on them before they figure out they can do anything different. (laughter)

Have you ever done any tracking?

Wanda: Yes. Jeremiah was certified in



Ch. K-Way's Rainbow Connection.

tracking. The particular fall we worked was a very bad year in terms of grass and hay, so they went out and took all the corn stalks, fodder, and so forth, and baled it up. Our track, which was supposed to be a beginner's track, started in one of these corn fields, the only vegetation of which was stalks four inches high, row after row of them. Jeremiah was extremely willing. He had never refused to start. He went out and looked and couldn't find anyplace that he was supposed to go and came back. I restarted him. He got a piece of a leaf of corn and brought it back and said, "Mom, this is all I can find for you." He was very expressive. There was no question that was what he was telling me. "I'm awfully sorry, but this is all that's out there." (laughter)

Bob: He just hadn't trained in corn fields and didn't know what to look for.

Wanda: It was essentially bare ground, and that's a TDX track. We flunked that one. Before the next spring, when we could have tried again, he got his heartworm, so that was the end of that. It used to just kill Jeremiah when I would go out and obedience train somebody else, and that's part of why I got away from it.

How intelligent are Samoyeds compared with other breeds?

Wanda: I don't know about other breeds, but they are more intelligent than many people.

Bob: I can't recall how many times people have called us with problems relating to the fact that the dogs were running the household. That doesn't happen by accident, it's a breed trait. (laughter)

How important is training to winning in conformation?

Bob: It sure helps.

Wanda: It's helpful, but not the entire answer. The relationship between the person and the dog shows through. That's part of the reason why they don't do as well with professional handlers as a lot of other breeds do.

Can shy dogs be corrected by training?

Wanda: Yep. That first bitch we got that was isolated because of rabies in the county, her first year she had seen her kennel girl, her owner, who was female, and the male veterinarian. That only male stuck pins in her, so she didn't have a high opinion of men. For the first week we had her, the only place she would eat was under a table in the corner of the bedroom in the dark. She would not eliminate on leash. At that particular time, we were having the fences changed in our yard, so we took her

clear across town to the Laskeys', and let her loose in their yard. (laughter)

Bob: Once every day.

Wanda: One weekend, she went a full 36 hours without urinating. So, with this bitch who didn't like any man, and very few women, we were doing this several days a week, going over and doing the carting. Don Hodges was in charge of that, and she thought he was a pretty good guy. Every time she saw him, she saw all these other dogs. She literally did not recognize anything other than a Samoyed as being a dog. She saw a Dalmatian, and I thought she was going to screw her eyeballs off trying to figure out what that was. We took her in obedience and had to use extremely gentle correction, mostly positive stuff, but we got to where we could show her in conformation, got her CD in not too many tries, took her in Open obedience, and showed her in at least 50 shows, and got her CDX.

Meanwhile, we had given her to my mother, and she finally got to the point where she went around and greeted all the ladies at the church circle, so, yes, training can work wonders with a shy dog. There's a lot to figuring out why a dog is shy. Not all shyness is genetic. Just plain isolation produces lots of shyness. If a person has a lot of shy dogs over the years, I would say that person probably lived out in the sticks where nothing was going on, and where going to McDonald's 50 miles away was a big deal.

Can you give any specific advice to owners who would like to handle their own dog?

Wanda: Go to a conformation class. The question is how to tell them which conformation class. Try to talk to people in your breed and pick and choose the best from what's available.

Bob: If you are in a large metropolitan area, it's not all that bad, because there are organizations for training. But for the person who is sort of stuck way in the boonies 50 miles from any training facility, it becomes more of a problem. In that case, they may have to learn just by going to shows and talking to people there and trying to pick up what they can along the way. It will be a lot more difficult, and they can expect it will be a longer process before they learn how to do things. But if you are observant enough and learn to ask questions and find people who will help you, you can learn to show a dog by going to shows. It's more expensive that way, too, but after twenty shows you will probably be better than when you started. (laughter)

Wanda: Try to find somebody with whom you can exchange work, packing their exercise pens and so forth, for some comments.

Bob: One very helpful thing is to try to go to a show with a nearby friend who has dogs, even if it's another breed. You

can learn a lot just by being with a person who has done it before.

Are your breedings natural or controlled?

Wanda: We learned from Sally McCarthy of Shamrock Acres Labs, who taught her stud dogs. We learned a lot of things from her and implemented them. There were breedings of bitches that were skittish, and so on, that we probably wouldn't have gotten if the dogs hadn't let us control and help. Jeremiah, after he had the heartworm, and when he had the treatment, a segment of the heartworm affected his spinal cord, so his hindquarters were just sticks. All they did was hold him up, and we could even get breedings with him in that condition simply because he was totally trained and cooperative in letting us help him.

One time he was loose in the house with a bitch that was ready to breed and came over to me like, "Come on. Help me. She's ready." Sally had a platform that she used to even up mismatched sizes and things like that. If necessary, I'll help a male get his penis in the right place, but if he seems to be able to do it himself, we'll let him do it himself. We'll hold the bitch, hold her up if she wants to sag. One of the things we do that's quite interesting that we learned a long time ago is if the tie is long and the dogs are getting restless, two people can pick up both dogs and lie them on their sides, and they do much better not trying to get away from one another. When Shanna went to Sun Dancer, it was a four-hour tie and they told us about lying them down, and, eventually, they had to call the vet to come and tranquilize him. The other thing that seems to work if it's getting unduly long is to trim his toenails - distract him. We're talking about over an hour here. (laughter)

Bob: You see the advantages of supervised breeding? We also generally do it in front of the TV set so ... (laughter)

What do you consider to be a fair stud fee?

Bob: The price of a good quality puppy.

Wanda: I can't say that we are really charging what we charge for pick puppies.

Do you think you should charge the same amount for an unproven dog that has no proven puppies, and a dog that has produced puppies, but nothing pointed, as a dog who has had champions?

Wanda: We have a try-it-out fee for the first time a dog is used, then we've increased the price when a dog is finished. I don't know that we've done that much breeding, and we kind of took after Doris McLaughlin. Omen's stud fee was \$350 at a time when lots of others were \$500, and some of them higher than that.

Bob: And our untried dogs were less, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$100 to \$200, but that's when a pet puppy was selling for \$200, too.

Wanda: One of the things that was

always part of our decision - we didn't always breed everybody who came and asked to have their bitch bred - was the thought, "If my dog was a bitch and that bitch was a dog, would I breed my bitch to him?" If I'd say, "Absolutely not," then I didn't breed the bitch.

How did you turn people down?

Wanda: In one case, with a real pet bitch that did not have a good temperament, was not a typical Samoyed, I told them that I didn't think she should be bred. They weren't happy, but two years later they came and bought a puppy from us. They had not bred her. Sometimes we have suggested someone else's male we thought would be more complementary.

Would you breed to a dog with a very serious fault if he had outstanding qualities?

Wanda: We have a cutoff point on each characteristic, and as long as it's above that cutoff point, yes. If it was absolutely old-fashioned cow hocked, no, I probably wouldn't. But if it was just a narrow rear and the rest of the dog was good, I might.

Bob: One fault you can cure pretty easily, in one generation if you have a mate that compensates for it, and provided you are willing to select against it in subsequent generations, it's not a bad thing to do. It's probably better than breeding to a dog that's mediocre in several areas where you can't hope to improve them all at the same time. What you have to do whenever you breed to a dog with a bad fault is to think about what's going to happen in subsequent generations.

Wanda: You have to keep it in mind for the next two or three generations.

Bob: Make sure you remember what that fault was, even though you don't see it in kids and grandkids. It's still hiding there.

What faults would keep you from breeding to an outside bitch or dog?

Wanda: They must have good hips and good eyes, and I would give preference to a dog with good angulation, good eyes, good lip line, proper coat - the perfect dog would be really nice. (laughter)

How many outside bitches have you bred?

Wanda: About half the breedings that Omen had. One of the interesting things is, when people come and ask me who their dog should be bred to, I'm not necessarily going to suggest one of my own dogs. I'll probably first suggest some related dogs, unless I see one specific thing that I think we have to find the right dog for, and if I know the right dog, I'll tell them who that is. I had a friend ask me when Omen was old why I didn't ever ask her to breed her bitch to him. I was absolutely dumbfounded.

Is it a good idea to breed to the top-winning dog?

Wanda: Only if it's the right dog. Frequently, even if it's the right bloodline, he may not be the right dog. Go to the father,

for one.

Bob: Breeding because of fashion is a very short-term viewpoint. It generally doesn't get you very far in the next generation. We've seen many cases where your really top-winning dog produces a number of champions, you wait a few years and don't see much happening in the second generation. I doubt very much if it's because those champions the top winner produced had not been bred. I think what happened was the people were just not satisfied with what they got for one reason or another. It happens too often to be pure chance.

How many litters should a bitch have?

Wanda: A really good bitch should have two to five, but the less good, the less number. I don't see any reason to breed anybody more than five times.

Bob: And breeding anybody once doesn't tell you very much. If you are in a long-term breeding program, you ought to breed the bitch to at least two different dogs so that you will have some idea of what she and her relatives will produce.

Wanda: One of the things we did early on was breed either a mother and daughter, or two sisters, or a couple of different possibilities, and get the comparisons of what came out of this one and that one. Then, either breed a young bitch to an old male, where you have a pretty good idea of what he produced, or vice versa.

Bob: As time went on, of course, and we got more dogs and more uniformity, this need to acquire information abated somewhat, so we don't do that quite as much as we used to, breed relatives to the same dog.

Wanda: One of the things that developed because of the way we went about it at first is, a lot of times, when we bred two sisters, sometimes her nieces were more like her than her daughters. A lot of Chaser's kids looked more like Class, and a lot of Class's kids looked more like Chaser. To some extent, it's not necessarily the one who wins the most who is the one to breed to. There might be a brother or someone that has more of what you need than the brother you see in the ring. A lot of times you will find a plainer brother who produces better than the winning dog, if you look.

Bob: In fact, there have been numerous times when we have found plainer brothers and sisters that we liked better than the one that was doing the winning. But then our taste is not necessarily what the average person might want either.

Do you help your bitches whelp?

Wanda: We're there. As long as they are doing okay, we let them do it.

Bob: We let them do as much as they are capable of by themselves. We are only there to handle problems. We do tend to tie off the umbilical cords and put iodine on them and make sure we are around to start

the puppies breathing if they need help.

Do you supplement feed very young puppies?

Wanda: Sometimes. If we have a bitch that's had a C-section, she's probably not going to have her milk in right away. We've had occasional bitches that didn't do very well for one reason or another and we've supplemented. I don't think we've ever completely raised a puppy on tube or bottle-feedings, though.

Bob: No. Occasionally, some puppies are born that are a little bit small, and we give them supplements just because we know they are not getting as much as their brothers and sisters.

What do you use to supplement?

Bob: Goat's milk or Esbilac.

Wanda: We can't tell you how we decide which. It's just whichever one comes to hand.

How do you feel about tube-feeding?

Bob: No problems with that. We use it consistently. We very rarely ever use a bottle.

Do you wean the puppies or let the bitch do it?

Bob: We let the bitch do it. The puppies are allowed to have dessert for as long as they want once they go on solid food. They pretty much tend to eat that consistently, and mother starts weaning them as soon as they get in their teeth. Usually, by about five or six weeks, they are getting 80 or 90 percent of their nourishment from solid food, and they don't seem to mind very much giving up on mama. Some are still nursing at eight or nine weeks, but it's very rare that that happens. She usually runs away from them by then. (laughter)

Wanda: We started out with an old California recipe, probably because we were out there when we had a couple of our earlier litters. We take very high quality hamburger, make it into little meatballs a little bigger than a nipple, probably an inch long, and just pick each one up and let the puppy eat that. It's enough like a nipple that they suck on it and, lo and behold, it tastes good.

Bob: The first couple of days, they are very messy eaters, but after two or three days, they get to the point where they are really quite excited about it and are gobbling it up.

Wanda: The first day we do it once, the second day twice, the third day three times, the fourth day we do it four times. After that, we start mixing in well soaked up dog food. I'll put it on one feeding before the next feeding, so it soaks four or five hours. We then gradually increase the amount of dog food and decrease the amount of hamburger. Because we feed a meat based food, there is no sense in giving them all this pabulum and all these other bases. They are going to grow a new kind of bacteria flora for each new kind of food they get, and there is no sense in changing it two or three times in the process of weaning. By the time they've had four days,

they are crawling in the pie pan and are ready to eat it.

Bob: We generally start feeding the ground meat at about sixteen days of age, and within ten days, they are eating solid food without any trouble at all. And most of the puppies are weaned by six weeks.

At what age do you evaluate your puppies for pet and show quality and what are you looking for?

Wanda: That's a whole 'nother lecture. (laughter) When the puppies are wet or newly dried, we take pictures, a flat side view, the top down from the head, and nose on to the head. We look for shoulder layback, length of neck. Touch of Class, who had the best layback, literally had the same distance from shoulder to nose as she had from shoulder to base of tail and that's what I look for.

Bob: The angulation from the rear, shoulder layback, length of upper arm and length of neck are determinable right at birth when they are wet.

Wanda: Earlier on, we did litters that we evaluated every week, and along about four or six weeks it would change from what it was at birth, and then at eight weeks it would change back to what it was at birth.

Bob: But you have to do the evaluation before the pups are two or three days old, because they begin to fatten out and change their shape after they are born. The best time to do the evaluation is when they are still wet, within twelve hours of birth. A lot of things can happen in between. From two to six weeks, you are probably best advised not to look at them at all. They are growing at such strange rates that you can't tell much of anything.

Wanda: We do a lot with chest shape at that time. We learned from a veterinarian to mold their hind legs backwards, stick them straight out behind them like they had just finished a long stride, and that's what you will get in the rear when you put the stifle in the cup of your fingers ...

Bob: And put your thumb on the point of the hip, and then bring the stifle back in your cupped palm, and make sure the stifle joint is directly under the point of the hip, and you can tell pretty much if you have any problems in the rear as far as toeing in, toeing out, cow hocks, that sort of thing. That works very nicely right after birth. It's pretty useless when they are five or six weeks old. It seems to work again quite well when they are eight weeks of age. You have to be very careful when you are evaluating rears at eight weeks, because well angulated puppies, or those with longer hocks, tend to not be up on them and look a little cow hocked when they are moving around, especially on hard surfaces. They may not grow up that way as adults.

Wanda: If the rears are improving from eight to twelve weeks, they'll probably be fine. If they get worse from eight to

twelve weeks, look out. We evaluate the coat. There's a particular ridge effect along the spine, and the further back that extends, the more coat they'll have.

Bob: Think of a Rhodesian Ridgeback, and if you see that sort of a coat pattern on a puppy right after birth, it generally means the coat will be rather profuse.

Wanda: We look at the carset and eyeset. You can see the eyeset at birth. We look at the shape of the muzzle. In profile, we look for a little bump, almost a Roman nose effect, and that will be a pretty puppy head. Jeremiah did not have that. Celene Kohlman had the litter out of Omen and Pride, and she called up and said, "I think this dog has Jeremy's head." It looked awful and had that bumpy nose. That's the first one we saw, a very pretty headed Ivan kid, and he got named Jeremy, because he was going to look like Jeremiah. He didn't look at all like Jeremiah. He was much prettier.

We check to see if they have dewclaws or not. Dewclaws are inherited. There are dogs that have fronts only and dogs that have fronts and rears. Dogs that have rear dewclaws will produce more puppies that have rear dewclaws.

Bob: We've only had two or three pups that have had dewclaws, if that many. They are very rare in Sams. I would say that probably about 30 percent of our pups do not have rear dewclaws.

Wanda: There are all kinds of funny things that don't follow through. At one time, we had a part of our line that were teetotalers and part liked alcohol. We used to be able to foretell from a particular breeding what we were going to get. It was the Sun Dancer kids that licked and carried the beer cups around after the picnic. We have pictures of them carrying around the big plastic booze glasses after a picnic. (laughter)

Bob: I don't think we can emphasize strongly enough the importance of taking videotapes of all the puppies that you produce as a breeder, at eight weeks of age, around twelve if you still have them at that point, and maybe again at a year or a year and a half and again when they are fully mature, say at four. The amount of information you can get from something like that is enormous, because it will better enable you to select which dogs you ought to use for breeding, and allow you to better predict what the dogs are going to look like as adults. Believe it or not, many people may find this hard to swallow, but a good 98 percent of the faults you see in an adult, you can see in an eight-week-old puppy, if you know how to see it.

Wanda: If you go back and study the puppy to see where it is, the next time you see it in a puppy, you can say, "I know what that will do. Forget that one."

Bob: It takes some work to develop a trained eye, but if you have a videotape,

you can go back and forth, slow it down and speed it up, and stop and go back and look at things again and again until you get it right. If you don't know what to look for, look at the videotapes with someone who does. Finally, if you are inbreeding for a number of generations, you have the advantage of going to those tapes ten or fifteen years later and look at the grandparents, the great-grandparents and the great-great-grandparents of what you are breeding now, and find out where certain things came from and how dominant certain lines of descent were for particular qualities.

Wanda: I am about convinced that the balance from front to rear is a separately inherited trait from the angulation here and the angulation there, this relationship and that relationship and that we got balance, I think, from Merlin, but I don't see anybody else from Merlin that has the strong angulation. That came from Ivan.

Do you cull puppies?

Wanda: We put down puppies that have cleft palates. We've had a few. We've had no puppies that were really misformed, misshapen monstrosities.

Bob: I don't think that's very common in Sams. I think they produce nicely formed puppies.

Wanda: Come to think of it, the two I've seen have been at other people's houses. Somehow, I've sort of gotten into this mode of, "They are having puppies. Why don't I go and help them?" I was not feeling very good as the local midwife there for a while. It seemed like everybody I helped had to have a C-section.

Bob: It's probably wise you were there to discover the need for a C-section. We give oxytocin to our own bitches sometimes when they're whelping.

Wanda: Only after they've already had at least one puppy!

Bob: First of all, you have find a vet that will allow you to use it and give it to you, and then you have to be very careful that you use it the right way and not give it too much too often or at the wrong times. Other than that ... (laughter) There are certain things that you do after twenty years of experience that you can do as well as your vet, and things you know you can't do as well as your vet, where you need broader or deeper experience.

Wanda: I'm very good at resuscitating puppies who don't think they want to breathe.

How much should a show puppy sell for?

Bob: That's a good question.

Wanda: Somewhere between \$500 and \$1,000. To some extent, I think people who charge a lot are overestimating the contribution that the raw material includes. There's an awful lot in feeding, training, grooming and keeping them up that goes into it. When we had that litter out of Rising Star, Jack Feinberg sent us two people

and said, "You will charge my prices." That was fine with me, though it was more than we'd ever charged for a puppy before. To some extent, I think it has to do with the quality of the parents. I sold the Connie puppies for more than any I'd ever sold any for before, but both parents were Group winners, and the pups turned out rather nicely.

Bob: It seems to be standard operational procedure to get a puppy back out of every litter. You just expect one puppy is going to come back for one reason or another.

Do you sell on terms or cash only?

Wanda: We've sold under every imaginable circumstance.

Bob: We generally try to gear the terms or sale price of the puppy to what the buyer wants, expects, and is willing to negotiate. If they don't have enough money, we might arrange a puppy back in the future or something like that. If it's a really good quality puppy, we might work out some sort of co-ownership arrangement if they can't afford to pay the full price.

Do you require a spay/neuter contract on pets?

Wanda: We put in our contract that it's a good idea. We've only required it a couple of times when the dog had something specific we didn't want to see carried on in the breed.

Bob: Generally, it's difficult to enforce those things. You can't really tell for sure, unless it's a very serious fault, that the puppy is going to be of inadequate quality when it grows up. Sometimes they get better with age.

Wanda: We haven't produced very many puppies over the years that I would be ashamed to see in the showring. We've sold a lot of what we considered show quality puppies to pet homes, and sometimes some good has come back out of it in that they've let us show the dog, or we've gotten to lease the bitch, or whatever.

Bob: After you've been breeding for several years, the average quality of your puppies goes up. You keep producing some good ones and your bad ones get better. Often, it's very difficult to tell the difference between the first pick of the litter and the third and fourth pick of the litter. The runt or last pick is probably not all that bad either. Certainly, after five or ten years, our worst puppy was better than some of the early litters we produced.

Wanda: Usually, we like to find a way to have at least two puppies out of a litter shown. Beyond that, we're more interested in them being in a good home than whether they are going to be shown or not.

Bob: Good show homes are hard to find. While it's conceivable that three or four pups out of each litter could finish their championship, we aren't going to find that many good show homes.

Wanda: That may be a function of

how much advertising we do and the whole

... *What do you feed your dogs?*

Bob: I do all the feeding of the dogs. The only time Wanda feeds them is when I'm not around. We feed them Show Results, which is basically a beef and pork meal based food with a little corn and a little fish meal. It has a nice vitamin and mineral package and our dogs seem to do quite well on it. I especially like the fact that it digests nicely and produces small, compact stools that don't smell very badly. When you have a lot of dogs around the house, that's a considerable virtue. (laughter)

Wanda: It makes very lean, muscular puppies to the point that we've had some vets complain to the people that their dog was too skinny.

Bob: We tend to keep our dogs a little skinnier than average the first year of their life. We don't fatten them up when they're young.

Wanda: They are not feeder cattle. (laughter) We probably keep them leaner than average all their lives.

Bob: It has to do with the fact that they live in small social groups in the kennel, and get a lot of physical activity, too, out in the yard playing and running around a lot, interacting with each other. We do cycle them all through the house at various times, but they are probably only house dogs about twenty or twenty-five percent of the time.

Wanda: Omen used to be very disgusting. He'd come in from the kennel for a half hour and then say, "Bye. It was nice visiting you," and he wanted to go back out in the kennel. That's where all the girls were. (laughter)

How important is diet to raising Samoyeds?

Bob: Extremely important. If a dog is not healthy and does not have proper nourishment, it will never reach its full potential. While we try to maintain the weight on our puppies at slightly less than what is considered normal by the average vet, we make sure the quality of food they get is extremely high. We don't feed them a lot of table scraps and other things around the house, although they do get to clean out our dishes and pans when they are house dogs. We never have to scrape our dishes before putting them in the dishwasher. (laughter)

Do you condition your dogs?

Bob: Those that we are showing regularly we do.

Wanda: I take the car, open the window, take a flexi-lead and trot them down this mile and a half of gravel road we have six miles away from us. Because I can regulate the speed and react if they have to stop and piddle or whatever, it isn't like the dogs that are on a treadmill. I think you can see a lot of dogs that are overtreadmilled and we don't find that.

Bob: They work at only one speed

when they are trained on a treadmill, whereas ours trot at a number of different speeds from fast to slow.

Wanda: It's faster when there is a squirrel that goes across the road ahead of them or a deer.

Bob: It's a gravel road, but it goes up and down and has curves so they have a variety of terrain. They get a chance to sniff the breezes and watch the birds and animals, too, so it's wonderful for the dogs and they really like it. They are excited when they go. Connie is so used to it she gets very disappointed when she doesn't go

be behind you a little bit. What you want when you are in the showing is a dog that breaks into a nice, fast, brisk trot, and maintains that as long as you want it at whatever speed you want it. One of the ways to get that is to roadwork.

Wanda: There are two houses on the road where we roadwork, and one of the guys that lives there came out the other day and said, "I want to see that reversed. I want to see the dog driving the car and you out there running!" (laughter)

Bob: It probably would be healthier for all concerned.



Am/Can Ch. K-Way's Classic Snow Fantasy.

every morning.

Wanda: Actually, the other two are worse these days. I have three I've been running and they absolutely demand to go. I didn't go today and they were very unhappy with me. (laughter)

Bob: The exercise really serves two purposes. It tightens them up, but it also gives the dogs a smoother gait, and they break into a trot more easily when they are in the showing. If you have a dog that spends most of its time sitting around the house, it's going to walk a few steps, then it's going to trot a few steps, then it might

How much grooming should be done before you show a Samoyed?

Wanda: Whatever it takes.

Bob: I would have said as much as necessary. (laughter) I guess it means the same thing.

Wanda: To some extent, we've had very nice wins with absolutely minimal grooming. The dogs were bathed and somewhat straightened out, and so on, and we've also done some very nice winning when we've misinterpreted the schedule and had an hour and a half extra and groomed them to within an inch of their lives.

Bob: A lot depends on the competition, too. You never know what you are going to be up against, whether grooming is going to be important on any given day. It might mean the difference between the first or second in the class, for instance. On the other hand, if the quality of the dogs you are up against isn't that great, you might win your class whether you groomed your dog or not. There are two things to keep in mind. One is, whenever you appear in the ring with your dog ungroomed, you are saying something about yourself and your dog. It makes a poor impression on people whether you win or not, and perhaps even poorer if you win while not groomed, because then everybody notices you. (laughter)

The other thing is that when your dog is better groomed, you are increasing your chances of winning, because the judge is more likely to notice you and think kindly of you if your dog is well groomed. That can be very important, because it's the one thing in the ring that you have complete control of. You can't control what the judge thinks, you can't control who the other exhibitors are or how they are going to perform on any given day, you can't even fully control how your own dog is going to perform on any given day, but you can control how your dog looks. If you happen to be out of coat, you might not have much to groom, but you can at least do your best.

Wanda: To some extent, I think grooming is way overrated. For all intents and purposes, it's a ritual we go through, and if we are satisfied that we have completed the ritual, we go into the ring feeling we are ready. If you don't get the ritual finished, no matter how long you spent at it, you won't feel you are ready.

Bob: If you don't feel you're ready, you aren't going to feel as confident, your dog will feel the little pangs of nervousness running through the lead and may not perform as well. If you lose a little bit of confidence, if you go into the ring with a dog that's not well groomed, you are putting yourself at a disadvantage.

Wanda: I think most Sams are over-groomed these days. We are still at the point where if the dog's been bathed, the toenails are cut, and the hair combed out, that should be it. There's lots of powder, chalk, sprays, creams, lotions, scissoring, but if the judge is any good, he should be able to see through all that - or feel through, would be more to the point.

Bob: The trouble is, more and more people seem to feel it's all necessary, because everybody else is doing it and nobody wants to be at a disadvantage.

Wanda: That's the ritual.

Bob: Just the combing itself can be a ritual. The rest of this is more a social thing, peer pressure, than actual ritual.

There is no need to put gobs of powder in your dog's coat. It was originally meant to clean the dirt out of the dog's coat. If your dog steps in a little dirt, you put some grooming powder on to clean off the dirt and brush it off. But a lot of people leave it in because the dog looks whiter.

Are there any particular shampoos or brushes that you especially like to use?

Bob: You use what you are comfortable with and that you feel makes your dog look good.

Wanda: Now I'm using a mixture of a human shampoo for gray hair, and Amway's LOC, their Smashing White, which is an adjuvant, and sometimes some Purina Animal Shampoo, if I can get it.

Do you trim whiskers?

Wanda: Nope.

Please tell us about your kennel setup.

Wanda: We have a room off our family room that goes out into the garage and into the family room, that is 13 by 24. We have three 4 by 8 pens and an end that is about 6 by 12. They live in groups, and there is another group or two that's in the house, and they circulate back and forth. The runs go out of the end of the building, but they are not in and out kennels. We have to take the dogs around to the door and put them out. There are three runs 5 feet wide by 65 feet long with wire underneath and gravel on top.

Bob: The wire is on the bottom and is covered with six inches of number two washed stone.

Wanda: There is a section of fiberglass roofing that's ten feet long and covers one end of the run to keep the rain off and give them a shady spot. There are three of those runs side by side. Theoretically, they get to run back and forth and bark at each other and get lots of exercise, but then the neighbors complained about the dogs barking.

Bob: But we felt the long runs were necessary in order for them to get the proper exercise, rather than putting them in little short stubby runs. The number two stone, we feel, is very good because it's easy to wash and clean and provides them with a footing that is far less damaging to their feet than concrete. They are indoors on concrete, which we've covered with indoor/outdoor carpeting, but we didn't want them to have a very hard surface when they were outside. We also have a large area, a dirt yard that is about 100 by 150 feet. That's for the dogs that we aren't showing regularly and that don't have to be white, puppies that are just growing up, or adults that are in retirement. They can go out there, dig holes, lie on the ground, have their fun, and we don't care what they look like.

Wanda: There is also a willow tree there with lots of sticks for them to carry around. There's a people swing they used to jump up on once in a while, and we have a wood construction that is used as a play-

ground. We had an old stairway so we put that up one side. There are platforms at different levels where they can jump up and crawl through and there is a tire they can run through. They can crawl up there, look out, see over all the fences and watch the world go by.

Bob: A few of our girls like to climb up to the top level and look out over the fences to see what is going on.

Wanda: There is also another backyard that is about 80 by 100 that opens out from the kitchen, and that's where the house dogs exercise in twos or threes. There are open crates all over the place. When we are gone, the dogs are in the kennel or in the house. Nobody stays out when we are not around. There's a couple of crates by each bed, there are crates in the family room, there are crates in the puppy room. We have 500 kennels for the biggest boys, and some 400 and 300's, and the next thing you know the biggest boy is in the 300. (laughter) For those people who think that crates are terrible, I have a picture that has Shanna, Windy and Gazelle as puppies, all in a crate about the size of a 400 kennel with the door wide open and all of them peeking out saying, "Hi, there." (laughter)

Can adult males and females be kept together in the same run or exercise area?

Bob: Yes. We try to keep a boy in with each group of girls, if possible, except when the girls are in season.

Wanda: Most of our boys we can have two at a time in the family room with us. There's some stalking around on toenails and muttering (laughter), but we only have one combination of two young males who think they have to fight. The one who decided he was boss, the other guy objects to.

Bob: But, basically, we're the boss and there is no fighting allowed indoors. Out in the kennel, we never keep two males together in the same run, so they never have a chance to get into any trouble.

Wanda: Arrow can be with anybody. He can go out with any of the groups.

How important is animal husbandry?

Bob: You can't do without it, not if you want to maintain healthy animals. You have to clean up, pick up, medicate, worm at regular intervals. The dogs have to come in for regular combing and tooth scaling and nail clipping. That's one of the reasons why we feel more than a dozen dogs is too many. It eats up a lot of hours in the week just doing those things.

Wanda: I'm really irritated to go to houses of people who have one, two or three dogs that are in much worse shape than any of my fifteen. We start brushing puppies before their eyes are open. We clip toenails at least once a week from a week of age on and they are used to it. It's a fact of life for them that periodically they get turned over on their back and get their toe-

nails trimmed.

Bob: Our dogs are constantly handled. As a result, we can walk into the vet's office, put them up on the table and they never give a bit of trouble.

Wanda: We do some of the things in terms of stimulating them to make the nervous connections, things like taking a Q-tip and stimulating their paws and holding them upside down, putting them where it's cold or hot for a few seconds. We had that one early litter that was only one puppy. Of course, she was terribly outgoing. She went out overnight for New Year's Eve when she was three weeks old. We took mom and puppy and went to a friend's house overnight for New Year's Eve. She was just, "Let me at the world!" (laughter) We said now that we knew this was what a dog could be like, all of our puppies should get that much attention.

Bob: There is something about single-puppy litters that they just develop egos that are a mile high. You have to be careful that you give them a little added discipline in order that they understand they are not going to be boss of the world. We send them into the kennel with the older dogs a little sooner. (laughter) It's really funny because the dogs do a better job of policing each other than we can.

Wanda: We went so far as to ship a young puppy six weeks old to a friend who had a one-puppy litter so he could have a brother for a while and learn to be a reasonable, straight dog. This puppy got shipped from Wisconsin to California to Florida.

What advice would you give to another breeder who is just starting out?

Bob: Don't be too quick. There is a certain minimum amount of knowledge you need in order to do a good job. The problem most people make when they decide to be breeders is they go out, find some dogs and have a litter. I would say you ought to spend two years studying, talk to a lot of other breeders, decide what bloodlines you want, study the ancestors, see as many of them as possible, put your hands on as many dogs as possible, talk to as many people as possible, and really build up a background before you step into the breeding game, so that you know what you are doing.

Wanda: Attach yourself to somebody who is going the direction you want to go, who is doing a good job, and have them guide you through it. I give people who are interested in breeding a bitch the Rutherford's *How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With*, and say, "This is what I expect you to do. If you aren't going to do that, you aren't going to breed to my stud."

Should a new, prospective show person go to the big kennels to buy a puppy?

Wanda: I've seen a lot of people who did who didn't get very good dogs. It's a case of doing your homework and evaluat-



Ch. K-Way's Destina.

ing the dogs, rather than just assuming because it's a big name or a big winner that what you get is going to be the same.

Bob: The trouble with big winners is that they are often too busy and don't have as much time to invest as a smaller breeder would. As a result, you may or may not get as good quality dog, and you may not learn enough to be able to do the right things when you are first starting out.

Wanda: The other thing that amazes me is people who buy a dog and presumably get some pretty good directions as to what to do with the puppy and then go home and do everything differently and wonder why it doesn't turn out the same as others from that kennel.

Bob: There are two things you need. One is a mentor, and the other is the ability to take what you learn and apply it.

Wanda: There are a lot more books now than there used to be, but many are still unspecific. I have yet to find a book to give to someone who is going to have a litter of puppies that tells them everything I want them to know.

Bob: The trouble with most books is they tend to be rehashes of what's been done before. Everybody writes sort of the same thing. I always feel when I read these books that they are somehow incomplete. That you are missing all the style and color and interest that goes with breeding dogs. You are just sort of sticking to basic fundamentals. There is just something that isn't

there that should be.

Wanda: I still think the book that comes closest to having it all is the one from Australia, which is no longer in print. She tells you to sit down with a drink and a good book and be prepared to be there and tells you what you are going to go through.

What kennels do you consider to be the best today?

Wanda: If I knew that, I'd know who to breed to.

Bob: Everybody has faults and virtues. Often, what's best for one person is not best for somebody else. It makes it very difficult to pick and choose unless you are very familiar with what you have and know what you are looking for. Often, you can find the solution to your needs in strange places, like not necessarily somebody's kennel, but a dog descended from somebody's kennel that is living in a backyard in some town some distance away.

Do you recommend joining a local breed club, the national club, and/or an all breed club?

Wanda: All of the above.

Bob: There is nothing that can teach you better than other dog people. The closer and more contact you have with people from all different breeds, the better off you are going to be.

Wanda: To some extent, I don't think you can learn what you need to know just by reading. You have to talk to people and get it from experience, preferably somebody else's experience.

Bob: That's what's missing from all the books! My twenty years of experience. That's why I feel they are not complete. (laughter)

Do you feel SCA is doing enough to educate judges and new members?

Wanda: I don't know that you can ever do enough. They are doing some things, which is more than a lot of people are doing.

Bob: Yes, and it's better than it used to be. Before, you were given your three provisionals, given your little card and sent off to do your thing.

Wanda: That's AKC, not SCA.

Bob: Well, SCA is better than it used to be, too, because we have judges' seminars now and some educational materials available. I'm not sure the breed clubs should accept the responsibility for teaching everybody who comes into the breed. That's something the individual has to do. You have to be motivated enough to seek out the information, to talk with people to find out where things are. It's by learning to get at this information that you actually acquire the ability to absorb it. That may sound like pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps, but I don't think you can sit there like a sponge and expect all the information to come into your brain and stay there. Unless you are actively doing something, like talking with people, going to shows, working with a dog, you aren't going to be able to absorb all the knowledge you are exposed to.

Wanda: I don't know how to do it better, but we aren't doing enough to transmit the expectations. Everybody should know they should be x-raying, everybody should know they should do eye checking, everybody should know what ethics are expected in grooming and showing, between people, etc. There is a code of ethics, but there isn't a list of what the ethical things are.

Do you think the AKC video is a good one?

Wanda: Yes. It's not what I wanted it to be originally. I don't know that making it all video would be any better than what it is now. I think it would be very hard to produce a film that would show all the things I think are important in how a dog should be built and how it should move. We've, at times, shown them to puppy purchasers and find them very good for that purpose, too.

Is there adequate literature on Samoyeds?

Wanda: Probably enough that's breed specific, yes.

Bob: There isn't a disparity between Sams and other breeds as far as what's being published. There's enough out there.

How long have you lived here and why did you move here?

Wanda: Since 1978. We moved to Poynette because we had seven dogs in a city lot. (laughter)

Bob: It just got to be too cramped so we moved out in the country.

Wanda: We had seven dogs in a bedroom that was about two feet of edging around a king-size bed. (laughter)

Bob: Take the room we are in, cut it in

\$150,000. I don't foresee them enjoying having the dogs next door, particularly.

Bob: We'll have to cut down on the number of dogs within the next few years and probably will not be replacing them as they die off.

Wanda: I'd just like to find good pet homes for three or four adults. People either want a perfect dog at a pet price or they don't want to pay anything.

Bob: It takes a long time to place adults but we never give them away for free. We feel that if people aren't willing to pay something for the dog, they probably aren't going to treat it as being worth anything.

Wanda: Our minimum is \$100. If they won't pay \$100, they aren't going to pay for heartworm tests and stuff they need.

Were both of you born and raised in this area?

Wanda: Yes.

Bob: Wanda is from Madison and I'm from Milwaukee, so we didn't get too far away from home. I lived in California for a year when I was twelve years old and we moved out there again about twenty years ago for about six months. My work took me there.

How long have you been married?

Wanda: Our 26th anniversary will be in June 1994. We ought to be going to Colorado, because that's where we had our honeymoon.

Bob: We had our honeymoon at Tumbling River Ranch in Granby.

Wanda: On the road that goes up over to Silver Plume. There was a picture of a magnificent Samoyed head over the fireplace. I

don't remember ever seeing the dog around, but the picture was there.

What do you do for a living?

Wanda: Run around the country. (laughter) I'm a visiting nurse. I go out and see people when they come home from the hospital, with Medicare's regulations that send them home as soon as they are able to stagger. I work part-time, although sometimes part-time gets to be 50 hours a week. But I have lots of flexibility if I want to be gone on a Friday or Monday or a week here or there. I just arrange for somebody else to take care of my patients.

Bob: I'm a physicist and work at the Space Science and Engineering Center at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.



The perfect head.

half and put seven dogs in it, and you will know about what it was like. So, we decided we wanted more space and wanted to be in the country and bought a house in the middle of five acres. Then we felt good because we had elbow room. But we bought a place a little too close to the village of Poynette, and now it's expanding out to meet us, surrounding us. We've doubled the number of neighbors within a quarter of a mile within the last five years and it will probably double again within the next five.

Wanda: The people who are building houses across from us in what used to be the school forest have a list of deed restrictions as long as your arm and it requires they have a house that runs at least

I'm involved in doing analysis of spacecraft images, looking at motions and planetary atmospheres on the earth and our sister planets in the solar system. I worked on the Mariner 10 program, the two Voyagers, and now that space exploration is dying down a bit, I'm involved in building intelligent work stations for data analysis, and getting ready for analyzing these humongous volumes of data that are going to be coming down as part of the earth observation system in the late part of this decade. We are going to be "drinking out of a fire hydrant" at 100 times the data rate in the past, but we don't know how to handle the volume of data yet, so it's going to be interesting how we go about doing that.

Do you both have college degrees?

Wanda: I have an RN from Madison General Hospital School of Nursing, and one and a half years of college.

Bob: And I have a master's degree in physics.

Have the dogs affected your lifestyle?

Wanda: Oh, no, not at all! (laughter)

Bob: The funny thing about that is, the dogs have become so much a part of me I couldn't conceive of living without a dog now. Maybe not as many as we have, but certainly not without any.

Wanda: One of the things we used to do is figure out, if we had to get down to one or two dogs, which ones we'd keep. It's kept us with a sense of balance. It sounds like something you wouldn't want to do, but it keeps you honest with yourself.

What have been the benefits of being in dogs?

Wanda: The people. You can drive 2,000 miles, get a house found for you by a dog friend, move in, have two litters of puppies, go to their weekly classes, have somebody to go to coffee with after training class, develop a whole new set of friends, and six months later move home with ten dogs instead of three.

Bob: The telephone bill is about \$150 a month, and it's money well spent, because you have friends all over the country. It's really the people, the reason we've stayed in it that long; we have met so many nice people.

Wanda: People at work understand when I say someone is dog family that it's someone who has related dogs or who we correspond with who has dogs.

What are the drawbacks of being in dogs?

Wanda: We don't have a clean house. (laughter)

Bob: It always looks like a tornado just went through five minutes ago.

Wanda: We could have some really pretty furniture and statues and things if we used the money we spend on dogs. We figured out we could send one dog with a handler for the same amount of money we are spending on all of the dogs.

Bob: Yep. I could have a lovely retire-



Ch. K-Way's Marksman's Fantasy.

ment if I'd saved all the money I've spent on dogs. Of course, I wouldn't have had much of a life to retire from. It certainly wouldn't have meant as much.

Wanda: I figure we are going to retire to the dogs. (laughter)

Bob: It's been very enjoyable and I certainly intend to continue, though perhaps not quite at the rate we have. I gave up competing in sled dog races because it took too much time and effort. Wanda has been going to most of the shows recently, and I go only about one weekend a month now. I stay home to take care of the rest of the dogs, fix the fences, cut the grass and that sort of thing, instead of going to shows all the time.

Wanda: It's hard to want to leave here. It's quiet, and you see the deer and birds.

Bob: We have a couple of sandhill cranes that live in the swamp behind our house that come back every spring and have some little ones. You hear the frogs and crickets in the evening and go to sleep with the window open. It's quite an ideal country life. We sort of bought the place with the intent of retiring here and I don't

see any changes appearing.

Is there anything we haven't covered? Any soapboxes or anything else you would like to say?

Wanda: I think we've said quite a lot. It's one of those times when you never know how much you have to say until you start saying it. (laughter) One of the things I have thought about doing is putting it on a tape recorder when I talk to these new people who have our puppies, when we deliver a puppy, or when we spend time with someone who has one of our dogs, and somehow put it all down as a Samoyed user's manual, like the computers have user's manuals.

Bob: I feel we've just scratched the surface. You could probably get another three or four hours if you went through all the questions again. (laughter)

Wanda: That's because he doesn't have a watch on. (laughter) What time do you think it is?

Bob: Let's see, we got back here probably around 9:30 or 10:00 and it's around 2:00 in the morning now.

It's 4:04 a.m.

Wanda: Yes, and we still have all those pictures to go through. Go get 'em. •