

THE SAMOYED QUARTERLY

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Samoyed People

The Samoyed Quarterly
Talks with
Lynette Hansen-Blue
POLAR MIST
Bend, Oregon

This interview was conducted at the home of Lynette Hansen-Blue in October of 1995 by Katy Merseal.

How long have you been in this breed?

I obtained my first Samoyed early in 1965, so 30 years.

How did you first get started?

I fell in love with the first one I ever saw. It was at a Fourth of July fireworks at a golf course, and somebody sat down in front of us with a five-month-old Sammy puppy. I looked at that dog and said, "Oh, wow, what kind of dog is that? Is it a Spitz?" The woman told me what it was and I said, "That's what I want." I got married in 1963 and that's when I saw the puppy. Shortly after my first child was born I was able to get a dog and it was a Sammy.

Where did you get your first one?

We looked in the newspaper classifieds and saw Sammy puppies advertised for \$25, and called up. They had one female left, and we went and bought her. I think she was about seven or eight weeks old. That's how I got my first one, unregistered, and of course we just got her as a pet. I didn't even have a clue what a dog show was. (laughter) That was my first Sammy. I'm trying to think how long we had her. She actually was killed about a year and a half later. We were building a new home and she had gone over to the building site with my husband. He had her out in front of the house there and a neighbor dog came over and they got to playing and ran across the road. It was a dead end road, really nothing there,

out in farm country. The dogs were playing and zipped across the road just as somebody was coming down the road in their pickup, and hit and killed her. Of course we had to go and get another Sammy, and we found another one in the paper. This one was also \$25. (laughter) So our second Sammy was a \$25 dog, unregistered as well. Eventually, when she was a couple of years old, somebody poisoned

probably had two or three Sammys. A friend who worked with my husband said, "I have a male. We should breed these dogs" so we bred them and I think I kept a puppy and raised it. When my stepfather saw that I had a real interest in dogs and that I had bred dogs, he said, "You know, if you're going to do this and you're really interested in having these dogs and you want to have puppies, you should do it the

right way. You should show your dogs and get quality dogs, and go from there." I said, "Oh, Okay." I was very interested in that. I didn't know anything about dog shows. I had never talked to a person who had shown dogs. I had virtually no experience. The first dogs I ever showed were actually the Dachshunds. He still had a couple of Dachshunds and he got me interested enough in it. I got a Dachshund from him, mainly because he didn't have a place to keep it when he and my mother got married. He talked

me into getting a Wirehaired Dachshund and that was actually the first dog I showed. I showed him in an AKC show and he went Winners Dog and Best Opposite Sex over a champion. I thought that was pretty neat. I thought I wanted to do this with my first love, which were the Sammys, so I started hunting for a show dog. I went to the dog shows and talked to exhibitors. I happened to be sitting at a dog show at ringside next to Martha Beal from Seattle, Washington. Tiki was in the Breed ring that day, Ch. Lullhaven's Snow Mist Ensign. He was actually the top winning dog at that time. I talked to her and told her I was looking for a puppy, and she

referred me on to somebody who had a litter up in the Seattle area. I drove to Seattle and bought a male. He was my first show dog.

What's the best dog you ever owned or bred?

There are a lot of them. (laughter) Probably the dog that's done the most winning is Am/Can/Bah Ch. Polar Mist Dr. Pepper. He has thirteen Bests in Show and approximately 150 Group placements. He's done the most winning. I formed a co-ownership with John and Kathy Ronald and John Ronald campaigned him as an owner. He is the top winning dog owner-handled in the Samoyed breed, and I think he's still probably holding number two all-time winning Sammy at this time, as far as I know. That's a pretty good record to be handled by an owner. I bred one of my bitches, Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Ain't She Foxy, that as far as I know is the top producing bitch of American champions in the Samoyed breed to date. I'd say she's a pretty good producing bitch. Another dog I bred that made SCA top stud dog and top winning Samoyed dog for 1992, I think, was Ch. Orion's Bud Light of Polar Mist. I've bred several top brood bitches. I had the top producing bitch for the year. Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Saucy Minx was one. She's the dam of Bud Light. There are several dogs that I've bred that have done very well. I've bred a number of multi-specialty winners, multi-Group winners. I guess all told, at last count I've bred 100 champions. The majority of them are American champions; a few of those are American/Canadian champions; Canadian champions only and some Mexican and International champions, with a total of 100 champions.

Not bad for starting out with two \$25 dogs.

Right. (laughter)

How many litters have you bred and what would you say was the best one, if you could pick one?

I don't even know how many litters I've bred. I've co-owned several litters, so I don't know whether you count those



or not. Counting co-owned litters, I've probably averaged about two to three a year. A few. (laughter)

Why do you do your breedings? Are you trying to perfect certain areas or do you just see a quality you like?

I guess every breeder has a picture in their mind of what they want, what they're striving for. When I first started in Sammys, I fell in love with the beauty of the dog but I soon discovered that it seemed like the dogs that were the prettiest and just took your breath away were the worst dogs for structure. My first champion bitch happened to be a very good dog structurally. She moved really well. She wasn't an ultra-teddy bear, stuffed toy looking Sammy but she could really move. When I showed her she virtually outmoved all the other dogs in the ring. Once I was on the other end of the lead from a dog that could really move, I couldn't settle for one that couldn't. I've been told I have a good eye for a dog. Even as a total novice I could see things that didn't look right in the dog. I couldn't tell you why they weren't right but I could see them. The first show dog I bought didn't have a very good front. I could see that, and I remember asking a handler what was wrong because I knew something wasn't right with this dog's front. In fact, he never did become a champion. The second dog I bought was this bitch and she was my first champion. Her name was Mackenzie's Polar Mist Nikki. I thought, "Why is it that the dogs that have really good structure and nice length of leg and can really move well are not pretty like the ones that can't move well?" My goal was to have a dog that was pretty and typey but also had really good structure and could move well. I've had that as my goal.

I really get into the pedigrees and what the dogs have to offer, their strong points. I feel this is a working dog and they're an Arctic dog so they need to be very hardy and very sound. I don't like dogs that are just bred for looks, the pretty teddy bears. This is not a non-sporting breed. This is not a dog that is bred to lay on the couch or a pillow. I want a hearty, healthy structurally good dog that could survive in the Arctic. Some of these short-legged teddy bear dogs would die. I feel it's the duty of a breed-

er to breed what that dog is supposed to be, but I still want it to look like a pretty dog, too. (laughter) It's not a wolf and I don't want the dogs to look like they're wolves or coyotes or something like that. I appreciate the beauty of the dog but I feel they should be the kind of dog they were originally intended to be, as Arctic dogs, reindeer herding dogs, draft dogs and working dogs. There is a goal there and I'm always striving to improve, to breed the best dog possible as

far as the breed is supposed to be. I'm always asking myself, if I do this combination or that combination and these are the good, strong points of this dog and these are the things they have to offer, can I bring this out by doing this combination? It's always very intriguing to me and something I keep striving to do better. Is this going to do it? Am I going to get the perfect dog? (laughter) I enjoy that aspect of it very much.

Have you used inbreeding, line-

breeding and outcrossing in trying to achieve that dog?

Yes, I've used every one of those in every form and combination. (laughter) Not every form, I shouldn't say that. I haven't bred brothers and sisters and that sort of thing, though I know of other people who have. I've done fathers and daughters. I don't like to do that if they're really close. I've done a father/daughter when the bitch's pedigree is actually an outcross; then I've bred her back to her



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Ain't She Sassy.

father. I've done that with great success. That is Bud Light's pedigree. He's the result of a father/daughter and he's a top producing stud and a top winning dog. I've bred an aunt and nephew combination, which produced a really nice winning dog. I've done a number of grandfather/granddaughter breedings and I've gotten some very good results from that. I believe Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Naughty Angel was from that type of breeding and she was a multi-Group placing bitch and produced some wonderful puppies, including a Best in Show, multi-Group winning dog, Ch. Polar Mist Code/Breaker. I've had some really good success. I've done some outcrosses that have turned out really well and that I've been really happy with, so I've gotten some very good results doing inbreedings, linebreedings and outcrossings.

Who or what do you feel has influenced your breeding the most?

When I first got started I didn't have a lot of help. I did a lot of trial and error. I did become friends with Peggy McCarthy who was a very successful breeder at the time. She had some top winning dogs and top producing dogs, and I became friends with her. In fact, my bitch Ain't She Foxy who is a top producing bitch was sired by one of her males that she bred. He was a Best in Show winning dog and his name was Ch. Silver Raffles of Misty Way. He was also Dr. Pepper's grandsire. He produced another bitch for me, Am/Can Ch. Pepsi Cola of Polar Mist. She was Dr. Pepper's dam and her sire was Silver Raffles of Misty Way. Her dam was a very tightly linebred Beardstone bitch and that was a total outcross breeding. She produced Dr. Pepper and Ain't She Foxy, who was a linebred bitch. He was the sire of two very important bitches for me, one a total outcross and one basically a linebreeding. Peggy was a friend and mentor for several years until she died, I believe in the early '80s. I obtained my first show Sammy in '71 or '72, I think, so for nine or ten years I knew Peggy. I learned a lot from her. I went to shows with her and sat at ringside with her, and she would point things out and explain things to me. She was really into good structure and movement, as well. For a long time Peggy's dogs had really



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Ain't She Foxy.

good movement but most of them had very large ears. She said, "I don't know what it is, but it seems like large ears and legs seem to go together." (laughter) I wanted the movement in the legs but I didn't want the large ears. The large ears are back there in my dogs' background and every once in a while one pops out of the woodwork. She was probably the most influential person for me. I moved to Montana after that and there wasn't anybody close to me who was an older, experienced breeder so I just learned everything on my own after that. Fortunately, I guess I'd had enough experience after ten years to learn a lot on my own.

Do you feel you have a distinguishable line and what do you think others are looking for when they see your dogs?

I believe I do because people

tell me that they recognize my dogs. There are dogs I'll see when I'm out across the country, and I'll say, "I really like that dog or that bitch," and of course I'm curious to find out what the bloodline is and many times I've found out it's my own. I guess I like what I breed, since I'll pick them out in other parts of the country. (laughter) Of course, I haven't necessarily bred the dog. In many cases I haven't, but I find out that the sire or the dam is a dog I have bred, or I've bred both the sire and the dam sometimes but they're a second generation or I've bred the grandparents.

How do you rate type, temperament and soundness in order of importance?

They're all very important and I hear different arguments that if you don't have a dog that has the Samoyed type, then what

do you have? The dog has to look like a Samoyed. Soundness is very important to me. They're probably pretty equal. Temperament is very important. I've always tried to maintain good, sound temperaments as well. I think they're all pretty equal, I guess you'd have to say. (laughter)

How did you come up with your kennel name, and do you use any type of scheme in naming your litters?

Of course I was very new when I came up with my kennel name. I was told I should establish a name right away if I was going to start showing and breeding dogs. The first male I bought, my first show dog, was from the Polar Prince line so he had Polar in his name and I also had the Misty Way dogs, in association with her, so I just put the two together. There was Misty Way and there was Polar Prince,

so I just used Polar Mist. (laughter) It wasn't super original but that's how it came about.

What about your litters? You have some sodas and some beers.

(laughter) I just thought Pepsi was a really cute name. I knew somebody who had a dog - in fact it was a Bullmastiff - that was named Pepsi and I thought it was such a cute name. When the litter that Pepsi was in was born I just named her Pepsi Cola and I bred her to Ch. Belaya Sgt. Pepper. So we had Pepper and Pepsi, and that's how I came up with the Dr. Pepper name. There were some puppies named from that along the pop lines. There was Shasta, which used to be a cola name, and Soda Pop and a few names like that. Then I started out with Ain't She Sassy and we had a whole lot of "Ain't She" names. (laughter) A lot of bitches. You could come up with a lot of cute names: Ain't She Cute, Ain't She Special and on and on. I think you asked me about one of the best litters I've bred. I've had a number of litters with some outstanding puppies that have gone on to be big winners and producers, but probably a very significant litter for me was the first litter I did with Ain't She Foxy and Ch. Iceways Ice Breaker. Ice Breaker is the top producing stud dog in the history of the Samoyed breed. I bred Ain't She Foxy to him and she became the top producing bitch in the history of the breed. She only ever produced puppies from Breaker. She was never bred to any other stud but him, so the breedings with Breaker and "Kit," her call name, were very significant in making her the top producing bitch. Her first litter was an all-champion litter. We had a National Specialty Winners Dog out of that litter and we had several Group placers so it was a very significant litter. I've had a number of other significant litters, as well, but that one stands out because it was my first all-champion litter and because so many of the puppies in the litter did some very special things.

How many dogs do you keep now and what's the most you've ever kept?

I pretty much maintain about eight dogs. I've been down to six in recent years and I think I was up to twelve a couple years ago. Out of the eight I have a dog going on fifteen years old, I have a nine year old and I



Am/Can Ch. Pepu Kola of Polar Mist at six years. Dam of Dr. Pepper and Great White North.

have two seven year olds, so the majority of them are older. I have a couple of young males, a two year old and a three year old, and a puppy bitch that's ten months old. That's pretty much it. I have some younger dogs and some older dogs, and not much in between.

What is the ideal conformation of the Samoyed?

We have a standard and the dog should meet that standard. To me it is not a dog that is extreme. It's not a wolf and it's not a big fluffy teddy bear, either. I don't think this standard calls for that type of a Sammy. The dog is somewhere in the middle; that's my ideal. I do like a pretty dog. I like the shorter, broader muzzles that give a good wedge shape to the head. I don't like an ear that's too big. I like the smaller to medium size ear.

My personal preference is a

medium size dog. I've bred some quite large dogs and I've had some on the other end, on the smaller side. When I've judged I don't penalize size at all. It isn't even a factor when I've done judging. When I judge a dog it's on the total dog and the structure, the whole look of the dog and the way the dog moves, and I don't care if it's a nineteen-inch bitch or a 23 inch bitch. If the dog is built right, moves right and looks right it's okay with me. I have a male now that's 24 inches and I have another male that's 22 1/2 inches. I like the top of the standard for a male. I think 23 inches is a really nice size male. Most of my bitches tend to run 21 1/2 to 22 inches, a little over the standard for a bitch, but on an average most bitches are slightly over the top of the standard, at least in this part of the country. I feel the size of bitches

should be raised, as far as our standard goes. I think a 22-inch bitch, instead of a 21-inch bitch, should be our standard size.

I don't like extreme heavy bone but I like nice medium bone. A medium coat would probably be my ideal, not super heavy humongous coat, but I don't like the really short ones either. I've bred both. (laughter) I don't put anybody down for having either. My personal preference is a nice medium coat that stands out with good texture. I like the dark eye. Nose color is not that important to me; the quality of the dog is more important. Way too much emphasis is put on black noses, though anymore a majority of my dogs have the black noses. Liver and brown are so common that I feel a lot of our dogs are penalized for it, to the point that many Sammy exhibitors dye the noses

because they are penalized for it. Judges will put the dog down for having a natural colored nose or having a lighter nose other than black. I would like to see the word "preferred" or "preference" removed from our standard as far as nose color goes. They are an Arctic dog and Arctic animals, especially at certain times of the year, lighten up anyway, even if they have black pigment. Of course, black is always prettier, it shows up better, but that is not that important to me.

Good movement is very important to me. I want a clean front. I don't want to see toeing in or toeing out. I want to see a nice, correct rear with good drive and reach, a nice side gait. Our Sammies are supposed to have a slight V to their rear moving away, and that's what I like to see. The majority of them have parallel hocks, and some judges when they see a good correct, slightly V'd rear think there's something wrong with the dog. (laughter)

How do you feel about the colors of the coat? Is it very important in the ring? If everything else is equal, will the coat make a difference in whether that dog will win?

It depends on the judge. I love showing under breeder-judges because I feel they know the breed and they're not going to penalize a dog for having a liver nose and they're not going to penalize biscuit or cream. I have found that many judges that are not Samoyed breeder-judges will penalize the dog for not having a really white coat. That is not to be penalized in any way or form in our standard. The colors are white, cream, biscuit and combinations thereof and I don't think that should be a judging consideration. They should be judging on the quality of the dog.

What are you looking for in a Samoyed head?

Our standard describes it very well, and that's the kind of head I like, with the wedge and not too long of a muzzle and a nice stop. Nice eyes. They're supposed to have sort of an Oriental look, with a little slant and an almond-shaped eye. I've already said I don't like super-big ears, though I've bred some. (laughter) I believe when you fold the ear down it should come to the outside of the eye. Our standard describes the head very nicely and that's the kind of head I like.

If you could judge the dog on a scale of 100 points, how many points would you give the head?

I would give way more points to the structure and the movement of the dog. The head would be one of the least important things as a whole. I don't know how many points I would give it. I like a pretty dog and I like a pretty head, but a dog doesn't survive or move on its head. I know people get really hung up on heads and die for a gorgeous head and ooh and aah

Our standard, again, calls for the bone of the tail to reach the hock. I love long tails. I just think they're so gorgeous and set the dog off so nicely, so if the tail is longer than the top of the hock that is just fine with me. (laughter) I haven't always had long tails. I think my first champion bitch had a bit of a short tail, and her daughter had a short tail, and her daughter had a short tail ... (laughter) I've bred to a number of dogs with long, beautiful tails and once in a while I still get a

that don't have an ideal temperament, but not very often. The majority of Sams do have a wonderful temperament. My experience is they're just very sweet dogs. They're people-oriented, they're loving, they want attention and affection. I rarely see any aggression. I've seen it occasionally in the ring when you go to National Specialties all over the country and you see every line of dog. I've seen a few that actually growled at the judge and their handlers and even their



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Naughty Angel.

over it, and I can appreciate a beautiful head, too, but I get really irritated when judges or other breeders cannot see past a pretty head. It's one of the less important things to me.

What about the ideal tail length and set?

short tail. I've been getting some really nice, pretty long tails lately and I really like it. It just makes a really nice picture.

What is the ideal temperament for a Samoyed?

They're a friendly, affectionate dog. I've seen a few dogs

owners. That's the exception. I've only seen a little bit of that. What you'll often see, especially in young males that are just getting old enough to be feeling their oats, is that they tend to act somewhat aggressive towards other males. I've had a couple

dogs myself that have done that. People think, "Oh, that dog's bad tempered"; in actuality those dogs are so sweet and loving, they wouldn't even dream of growling or doing anything like that toward a human or a child. They're just as trustworthy and as loving as can be, but I've seen them act a little aggressive towards other males. I've found it to be kind of a phase they go through, and some corrections usually take care of that.

Do you think the standard is a

good one?

Pretty much. I totally disagree with the 45-degree shoulder layback because there isn't any such a thing. For years I believed that there was and was trying to breed for that, and through reading a number of books on structure and gait and movement I discovered that you can't even find a dog with a 45-degree shoulder layback in any breed. I think a Dachshund is probably the closest. I do not like that in the standard since

that's old thinking that's come about from many years ago when they first started with show dogs and standards. They used the horse as the example for structure, and of course a dog and a horse aren't built the same and they don't move the same. They were saying that a dog should have the same kind of shoulder as a horse, which is not true. Since there isn't anything such as a 45-degree shoulder layback, I don't think it should be in our standard. I disagree with that.

I'd like to see the bitch standard about an inch higher for height on bitches. Other than that I think it's a pretty good one. And the nose preference, the word "preference." I don't like the black nose preference in there. (laughter)

Should there be any disqualifications?

The disqualifications are blue eyes, which they're not supposed to have, and any other color than the white, biscuit or cream. I know there have been



Am/Can/Bah Ch. Polar Mist Dr. Pepper.

some Sammys born with black on them and most of us, if we've been around long enough, will find black hairs in our Sammys. We do know that way back there were some Sammys that were black and white, and the breeders in England decided they just wanted to go with the white ones instead of the black and white ones. There are dogs in their ancestry that had black in them, so that's why every once in a while you'll find a Sammy that crops up with some black on them. From what I've heard or know of it's a very small black spot or something, but you'll find the black hairs on our dogs today every now and then.

What are the most serious faults in the breed today and the most common ones?

Probably fronts are the hardest thing, the most faulty thing that we still see in the breed. From the time I started in Sammys almost 30 years ago, the side gait has improved. I've seen

an improvement in that over the years. I've seen rears improve, though I still see a lot of parallel hocks that are too close, close rears. They're still better than what I saw 25 years ago. I see more fronts that are better than you used to. You hardly ever saw a good front 25 years ago, but now you see some good fronts. It's still probably the biggest problem in our breed. Toeing in, toeing out, really straight shoulders, lacking reach in the front. They're not clean.

What is the ideal foot?

Whatever the standard says. (laughter)

Do you feel that champions should be specialied?

Not necessarily. Specialing can be very expensive and very time-consuming. I don't do a lot of specialing with my dogs, though there have been a number of them that were specialied. Most of those were done through a co-ownership with someone else who wanted to do that.

Most of the specialing I do is at specialties now and then. My life is not devoted to breeding and showing dogs. I have a life besides that. For some people it is their whole life and that's fine. If that's what makes them happy and that's they want to do, they want to go to dog shows every weekend, that's fine. I guess I'm a little more well-rounded person. I have other interests and other hobbies, other things I enjoy doing. I don't live and breathe dogs. They are a love of mine and a passion of mine, but not to the point of excluding everything else. I don't choose to personally special a dog. If I have a dog that's so nice it should be specialied, I try to do a co-ownership with somebody who would enjoy that and wants to do it. I don't think it's mandatory to special a dog and anymore you have to be pretty well off to do that anyway. If you can't do it yourself, then you need to hire a handler and that's

quite expensive. I know people who spend thousands and thousands of dollars a year specialing dogs. I hear that forty, fifty, sixty thousand dollars is not uncommon, depending on how much you want to special. Not everybody can do that who loves and enjoys showing and breeding dogs, so I don't think it's mandatory.

Have you ever used a handler?

A little bit. Not very much. I used a handler a couple of times when I first got started. The fun of showing for me is showing the dog myself. I get real uptight to have to sit at ringside and watch somebody else showing my dog. I enjoy showing, it's fun and I like to be in there on the end of the lead. I've had a handler on one of my bitches here for the last year, and in fact we are forming a co-ownership on her at this time. She won't show for me. I've put points on her, but she just won't do it for me so I put her with a handler who can get



Polar Mist Nauti Girl.

more out of her than I can. I have used a handler a few times but not very much.

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

Yes, many times. Mainly in Sammys I've handled my own breeding, dogs that I've bred that people have sent back to me and asked me to handle at shows. I've done a lot of those over the years. I've handled as a favor for friends who needed somebody to handle a dog or take one in the ring because they had to take another dog in or something like that. I have handled Keeshonden, Boxers and Akitas for a fee for other people and I've handled Pulik, Lhasas and a couple of other breeds as a favor for friends.

Does making the Top Ten or Twenty mean anything?

It's nice to have a dog up in the ratings. It means a lot to the person who has the dog up in the ratings. (laughter) I enjoy the ratings and I like to see them. I think it's meaningful.

Do you feel that judging is fair?

On the Breed level it's pretty fair. Some judges hardly know one end of a dog from the other, in my opinion. (laughter) Some of them only know handlers' faces, but I think in general, especially on the Breed level, most judges are trying to do a good job, or at least what they feel is a good job. They may not be doing a good job, but to the best of their knowledge they are. (laughter) When you get into the Groups, I'd be very naive if I said there wasn't a lot of politics that goes on in the Group level, because I know there is. I've talked to people who have done extensive specializing and have played the game for many years, so I am aware that that does go on. I tend to be a little naive myself and feel that judges are really judging the dog, but I know there's the other part of it that goes on too.

Do you feel that advertising influences judges?

Some. When some judges, especially if they aren't in the breed and they don't know the breed that well, have seen a dog advertised a lot and that dog comes into the ring, they MAY figure, "All these other judges think this is a great dog, he's number one top winning dog, I'd better play it safe." I think it helps.



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Ice Vixen.

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

I prefer to show under a breeder-judge because they know the breed, and it's been my experience showing under breeder-judges that even though that particular breeder may be breeding a totally different type of Sammy than I have and their main strengths are something different from what my dogs' main strengths are, they still recognize a good Sammy. I found this in almost all cases with few exceptions. I've been under some breeder-judges whose dogs I don't particularly care for and I don't think they're particularly good dogs, they're kind of mediocre, but I will watch them put up very good Sammys. I feel they know what the breed is supposed to be like and they recognize it. Maybe their personal preferences are something different and they're not mine, but for the most part they know what they're looking at. I have always

enjoyed showing under breeder-judges.

Do you feel that popularization of this breed would help it or harm it?

My observation of breeds that have become popular is that it does nothing but harm the dogs, harm the breed. It's very detrimental because everybody's got to have one, everybody's got to breed them. They don't know what they're doing, they're breeding to the dogs down the street. You come up with all kinds of genetic problems and temperament problems when a breed becomes very popular, so I would hate to see the breed become any more popular than it is.

Do you think it's ethical to retouch advertising photographs?

I don't think it's ethical to retouch the dog's picture. Maybe if the background or the people look cock-eyed or funny. (laughter) I wouldn't have any objection to that. I know a gal who did advertise and the picture she

wanted to use, of the dog winning the Group with the judge and the sign and everything, was a great picture of the dog but her eyes were closed and her face was funny and she actually took her head off another photo and put it on that photo. (laughter)

How do you train puppies and at what age do you start?

For show training it varies. It depends on the time of year and what's going on. I like them to be as socialized and handled as much as possible when they're young. For show training I like to start out with putting them on a leash and letting them lead me around, with treats in my pocket. I can usually teach a dog to bait within a couple of lessons and usually on the leash as well. Usually somewhere around ten to twelve weeks I start in with the show training, at least for my type of schedule. For the most part my bitches have very large litters. Eight or nine puppies is average, so I can't spend every

day trying to leash-break eight or nine puppies before they're shipped out. It's a monumental job. (laughter) Just trying to keep them handled and played with and the other things is more important, so I don't try to leash-break any puppies that are to be shipped out by ten or twelve weeks old. I try to start working with anything I keep myself in that age bracket.

How appropriate is it to take a dog anywhere off-leash?

It's not really appropriate unless you have a very highly trained dog. I have a lot of obedience dogs. I've done a lot of obedience work and I have dogs that can go off-leash. I can stop at a rest stop and have them loose. I've done a lot of hiking with my dogs and I've taken them loose in the woods and the mountains. These are dogs that stay with me when I say, "Come." They don't run off. We just went on a week horse trip up in the wilderness area and we took one of my champion dogs with us. He was off-leash the whole week. He stayed with us completely. It's okay, depending on the dog and the situation. Where there's traffic or a dog that you're not sure of as far as training and obedience level goes, I'd be very careful because any little thing can happen, even with a well-trained dog. I'd have to be really careful of the location.

Do you attend fun matches and training classes?

Yes. Where I live now there are some training classes but there are not many matches. I have to drive several hours to a match so I don't go to a lot of matches. Once in a while we have some local ones that I go to, but because of the distance involved I don't do a lot of matches.

Do you believe in obedience training and getting obedience titles?

Yes. I have several dogs with CDs. I think I only have one dog with a CDX and another one I've been trying to get one on for a long time. (laughter) She does everything beautifully except she can't stand for the long sit out of sight. Down she goes. (laughter)

I have to wonder if that's obedience or it's just sitting down on the job. (laughter)

A lot of people say, "Oh, don't do obedience if you're going to do conformation." I feel if you have the experience and



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Saucy Minx.

you know what you're doing, you can do it and you can do it successfully. I have done it successfully many times. I've literally run from the obedience ring to the conformation ring and vice versa. The dog doesn't confuse either one. You use different body language, different leads, different chokes, different commands. When you're first training the dog may confuse it but they pick it up really quickly. You can do both simultaneously. Some of the old training a few years ago was really "You do it or else" and the dog was going to do the exercises because they were told to do them and they were forced into some of the exercises. Most of the training techniques nowadays are reward, praise and food, constantly giving treats. That's how I train anymore. The dog's happy to

work for you. It isn't getting so downtrodden that it isn't going to perform and not have any life in the conformation ring. They have lots of life in the obedience ring now because methods have improved so much. Sammys really train well to those methods, with rewards and treats.

How intelligent is this breed compared to other breeds?

It's a very intelligent breed, for the most part. I've run across a few dummies but for the most part they're very intelligent. In fact, some people say they're sometimes too intelligent. (laughter)

Do you feel shyness and aggression can be corrected by training?

Yes.

Do you feel a handler should be used?

I prefer to see owner-handlers show their own dogs

because of the politics of it. I also feel it's more enjoyable, but if circumstances are that you need to use a handler I don't see anything wrong with it, if you're not able to show yourself, if you don't have the ability or like in my case you have a dog that won't show for you. (laughter) Actually this handler is a Sammy person; she's basically a Sammy handler though I think she handles some other breeds.

Would you recommend a big-name handler?

Somebody who's competent and does a good job is just fine. If you're trying to play politics and you want to spend big bucks ... I don't agree with hiring a big-name handler when it isn't the dog winning, it's the handler winning. What good is that? You aren't proving anything. You aren't proving this is really a fab-

ulous dog. You're proving you have a lot of money and you can hire a lot of politics. I don't like that aspect of it.

What specific advice would you give to owners who want to learn to handle their own dogs?

Go to training classes and seminars. Practice. Go to conformation classes. Watch. A very good training tool is just to sit at ringside and watch people handle. What looks good, what doesn't? If you see something that looks good, practice doing what they're doing. Try to copy it. If you've got a video camera, film them. If you like the way someone is handling their dog, film them and watch it and practice.

Have you ever worked with your dogs doing what they were bred for?

Sledding and herding?

Yes.

Not very much. I've always had a desire to try the sledding. I've even bought some harnesses in the past and I worked with one particular dog for a while, but I've never really pursued it very much. A number of people who have bought puppies from me have sledded with them and done herding as well. It's a time issue. Like I said, I have other interests and hobbies that I like to do but I also own my own business. I've always been a very busy person. I've wanted to do some of the extras like sledding and I just didn't have anybody with the knowledge to get me started and help me do it.

Are your breedings natural or controlled?

Pretty much natural.

Do you help the mating along?

I do if needed. If I have a visiting bitch I usually do help them. For my stud dogs, I want to be there right from their first breeding. I want the male to learn that breeding a bitch involves Mom, that she is there and she can help and she can hold the bitch, because many times, especially with a visiting bitch, you will have to hold them. Not in all cases but in a lot of them, so I want the male to learn right from the very start that he can breed a bitch with a human hanging on to her as well. I want to be there to make sure that there aren't any injuries to the male or the bitch. With my own dogs, when I know the dogs, I just let them be out together and play around and do their own thing or I have them in

the backyard. Usually I put them in a shavings pen that's twelve by twelve with visiting dogs so I can help or be close by.

Have you ever refused to service a bitch?

Yes.

Why?

My dogs are only available to dogs of top quality and pedigree. They have to be show quality. I will not breed pets. I talk to and try to discourage people who call up and are looking for a stud dog for basically a pet bitch. I want the dog to be shown, either well on its way to its championship or a champion bitch, before I'll breed it. Like I said, I have to like the quality of the bitch. She shouldn't have any major faults and she should have a nice pedigree.

What do you feel is a fair stud fee, and should it be different for a

proven or unproven dog, regardless of titles?

Usually if a dog is unproven I'll stand him for a little less than what I'll stand him for the second time. I guess it depends on the pedigree, the quality of the dog and maybe how desirable he is. If he's a top winning dog many people will pay a higher price to breed to him, and of course your expenses are so much higher if you are campaigning a dog. If the dog is a good producer and has proven himself by producing quality puppies, the stud fee should be according to what's happening, the winning and producing.

Would that be in the range of a few hundred dollars or higher?

Yes. It should be the price of one puppy. I think most stud fees range from \$500 to \$700 on average, and that's right in the

ball park.

How many litters should a bitch have?

My bitches usually have four or five litters in their lifetimes.

What's the youngest and oldest they should have their puppies?

I personally breed my bitches from approximately two years of age to seven. Breeding until eight is okay depending on the bitch and her condition. I know of bitches being bred through ten years old, but my personal preference is to breed them through seven.

Do you help them whelp?

Yes, I do.

Do you supplement very young puppies?

No, not unless there's a problem with the bitch or her milk.

Do you tube - or bottle-feed in



Ch. Polar Mist Society Girl CD.

those cases?

Tube.

Do you wean them yourself or let the bitch do it?

I let the bitch do that. I start feeding them somewhere between three and four weeks of age, giving them some small meals, but I let the bitch decide. I do have some bitches that decide they don't want to feed them after three weeks. (laughter) I let most of them start gradually weaning them off themselves, but I do start feeding them daily after four weeks of age.

At what ages do you evaluate your puppies for show and pet quality?

I like eight weeks, eight to ten weeks. Usually I know pretty much what I'm looking at at eight weeks. Sometimes I like to hang on to them till ten weeks and still watch them. I have changed my mind in that time frame, or all of a sudden another puppy really stands out at ten weeks that didn't at eight weeks old. Basically what you see at eight weeks is pretty much what you get, but I still like that extra couple weeks to watch them, especially when you have large litters like my bitches do. (laughter)

What do you look for when you're trying to decide between show and pet?

The overall quality of the puppy, the way it moves. Movement is very important. Coming and going and side gait, and the way the dog carries itself. Its total structure and attitude.

Do you cull?

No.

Why not?

I do not believe in culling. I think anybody who thinks they're so good that they can knock a two-day-old puppy in the head is dead wrong. I've only put puppies down if they were born with a defect, a cleft palate or something like that. I've had some weak, small, puny puppies that have grown up to be top champions. They may end up the biggest, best dogs in the litter and they were puny, scrawny puppies. It's just because wherever they were in the womb, they weren't getting as much nutrition as some of the other puppies or they were conceived later than some of the other puppies so they were born smaller and scrawnier. I've seen some really scrawny puppies grow up to be absolutely fabulous dogs. Nobody can tell me

that because a dog is small or scrawny-looking it isn't any good. I only believe in culling defective dogs.

Do you sell on terms or cash only?

Both.

Do you sell pets with spay/neuter agreements?

Yes.

What about puppies back when you sell a bitch?

I have rarely done that.

At what age do you think they should be put in their new homes?

I usually ship puppies around ten weeks. Ten to twelve weeks is the average.

How important do you think diet is in raising Samoyeds?

They need a good, top quality food. I won't buy grocery store food. I think you should feed one of the better quality foods. There are several of them on the market. That's all I would feed.

What do you use for your dogs?

I'm using a food called Gereen right now. It's out of



Ch. Polar Mist Ice Princess.



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Great White North CD.

Texas and it's a breeder's food. I've used Dynamite before that, out of Idaho. It's another really good quality food. I wean my puppies with Eukanuba. I've fed Nature's Recipe and Iams in the past. My husband is a veterinarian and he likes Science Diet real well, though I've never really fed Science Diet.

Do you feed any supplements?

The foods have gotten so good anymore I don't think they're really necessary. I have used a Dynamite supplement, Showdown, and they have another supplement, Dynacoat, for the coat. Various people have used it and feel that it really does help with the coat growing in, so I do use some of that.

Do you condition your dogs, why and how?

Fortunately I'm in a position that I don't need to condition my dogs. They condition themselves. I live on 40 acres in an area that's quite dry. We don't get a lot of rain and mud and that sort of thing. My dogs are only in their kennel runs at night. They have twelve-foot runs where they eat their dinner and go to bed. I have large fenced yards outside in the woods. I put two or three dogs out together and they spend the whole day running, playing and digging. It seems like they never stop moving. Once in a while I'll see them all sleeping over there but for the most part they run and play all day. They have ferocious appetites when they come in at night because they've gotten so much exercise. They're muscled, they're hard, they're in good shape and condition. Most people aren't as fortunate as I am to have that type of situation with a lot of acreage for the dogs to run on and be out all day. Our weather is conducive to that. A drawback to it is that it's dry and we have sunny weather so I do get some sunburned coats. Other than that, they're in great shape. When I've done Sweepstakes and judging and that sort of thing I find a lot of soft, squishy dogs out there. (laughter) I'm not used to feeling squishy dogs. It's important for the dog's health and well-being to get exercise, and I feel they should be bicycle worked or road worked somehow if you're going to show a dog and keep it in condition. Some of my older dogs have been spayed and they aren't fat or overweight. They're four-

teen, fifteen, sixteen years old and they're in good health. They can run and play and I know it's because of the exercise they get.

When showing this breed, how much grooming is needed?

I don't like a lot of the artificial chalking. I've done it a little bit to clean up legs, especially if you're on a circuit and you're trying to whiten the dog up a little bit after they've been outside. Different parts of the country have different practices. Out here in the West I see very little chalking and very little of all the extras that I've seen in other parts of the country. A good, thorough comb-out and brush and a good bath, and blow drying helps the coat. Blow dryers are great; they really help with the body of the coat. Other than that, pretty much just a nice, clean, well-combed and brushed dog. I like the dog thoroughly combed out. I trim up the scraggly hairs on the hocks and feet and that's about it.



Ch. Polar Mist Crystal Keesha.



Ch. Polar Mist Code Breaker.

Do you scissor anywhere else or trim whiskers?

No. I don't like people who do sculpting. I don't think it's allowed, really, but a lot of people do it and get away with it. I don't think I've ever seen a dog dismissed from the ring for sculpting, but I don't like it. "What you see is what you get" should be the scenario. (laughter)

What are your favorite grooming products and tools?

I like a soft slicker brush, a pin brush. I like the Resco #80 combs, a coarse and a medium, and a Belgian comb for fine combing.

What's your set-up like?

I have an outdoor kennel. It's open on the sides but it has a roof on it. My dogs are on two-inch decking with gravel at the end of their runs. There's wire on the ground that cannot be dug through and the gravel goes over the top. The dogs do all their business on the gravel and they lie up on the decking and sleep on the decking. I don't like concrete; it's harsh on the coat. The dogs' coats get breakage. Standing and lying on concrete all the time is very hard on the dogs. I know it's hard on me so I assume it's hard on the dogs. (laughter) If they are in the kennel I like them on the decking. I train all my dogs to be house dogs as well. They aren't strictly kennel dogs. I've had dogs sleep in the bedroom with me or on the bed. I want them to be totally house-trained and have good manners in the house. I've never had a problem with dogs destroying my house or chewing it up or anything else. I've trained them to have good manners in the house so that they can be happy out in the kennel with the other dogs or happy and well-behaved in the house.

Can adult males and females be kept together in the same runs and exercise areas?

They can, under certain circumstances. I usually keep a couple of bitches and one male together or two to three bitches together when they are outside. I don't keep my males together, though I will have an older one with a younger one. I feel if they're raised together and they stay together, if they're in the house together, in a lot of cases they can get along fine, males that is. If they live in a kennel situation where you separate

them and you have bitches coming in season, you can have problems. The living situation of the people who own the dogs is a part of how it's going to work.

What advice would you give to breeders who are just starting out?

I would advise people who want to get into showing, who are interested in breeding and think this is something they would really like to do and enjoy to go out and find the best puppy they can buy. They should do research, read about people, talk to people, get information from breeders, get a feel for what the person's telling them. You need a good start. If you buy a mediocre dog and you get out there in the ring and you're getting beat over and over again because you have a mediocre dog, most likely you're going to lose interest and you're not going



Ch. Polar Mist Mover N-A Shaker at almost five months.



Ch. Polar Mist Mover N-A Shaker at eleven months.

to continue. If you want to do well and have a good foundation you need to start off with a good dog. I hear a lot of people saying, "I want to show and I want to get started, but I don't think I should go out and buy a really good, expensive dog to start with." Okay. The expense is not the purchase of the dog. They could have bought a really good dog from a great pedigree, a really quality dog, but they'll settle for a lesser quality dog, a more mediocre one, for maybe \$200 difference. You can spend that in one weekend going to dog shows. Those entry fees will start adding up fast, the travel, the motels, the food out. If you've got a mediocre dog that you're trying to get a championship on, you're going to spend a lot more than the \$200 or \$300 more it would have taken to go out and buy a really good dog. You get what you pay for, in most cases. (laughter)

Do you feel going to the kennel with the big-name dogs is the way to go, or is that just one option?

That is one option. I don't think you have to have a super big kennel. Like I said, people should gather information and not just buy from the first person. See what this person's done, what they've bred, what they breed for, what their goals are, what their dogs are like. Get as much information as they can and go out and buy the best you can.

What do you consider some of the best kennels today?

There are a number of them. There are some really good dogs in Colorado, dogs that have traits and qualities that I like a lot. There are some good kennels in the Midwest, as well as all parts of the country. From what I hear from a lot of people and from my personal experience going around the country, I feel the western part of the country probably has a higher percentage of quality dogs than a lot of other areas of the country. Of course, I live in the West so maybe I'm a little biased. (laughter) There are a number of really good breeders and kennels. Heidi Nieman is one, her dogs have for the most part the movement and structure I like.

Would you recommend that they join a local breed club, national breed club or all breed club?

You can learn and get something out of any of those types of

clubs. Either or all is fine. I belong to all three types of clubs.

Do you feel the parent club is doing enough to educate judges and new members?

They're doing better than they have in the past.

Is there adequate literature on the Samoyed?

I'm not sure what the parent club has to offer. I don't get their literature since I've been around so long. (laughter) I don't know what information they offer to new people or what they give to them.

Is there an AKC video in this breed?

Yes.

Is it a good one?

They revised it a while back. I saw the original one several times and it was okay. I've only seen the new one once so I can't remember all the things about it,



Polar Mist Russian Princess.



Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist First Stryke.



Family photo of Ch. Polar Mist Society Girl CD with offspring and grand offspring. Front row (left to right): Ch. Polar Mist Uptown Girl CD, Polar Mist Mov'n N-A Groov'n, Polar Mist Stryking Beauty, Ch. Polar Mist Dancing Cloud. Back row (left to right): Ch. Oprah's Myra, Ch. Polar Mist Daddy's Girl, Ch. Polar Mist Society Girl CD, Am/Can Ch. Polar Mist Nauti Natasha.

but there are some good things in it. I'd have to see it again. It's been a long time since I saw the revised one so I can't really remember how good it is.

How long have you lived in Bend?

I've been in Bend nine years. I originally lived in Oregon, then Montana for eight years and then moved to Bend. It was quite remote in Montana and it was a long ways to dog shows and everything else. We lived in a kind of depressed area and I wanted to move to a more popu-

lous area where I didn't have to travel such great distances, and I wanted to expand my business. I have a boarding kennel and dog grooming business, so I have a lot bigger and better business in Bend, Oregon than I did in Montana.

You said you were just recently married?

Yes. I was married in May, so five months on the third. My new husband is a veterinarian which is nice. (laughter) He loves the dogs. He had never had much experience with Sam-

mys and once he got to know the dogs - which didn't take long, he absolutely adores the dogs - his very words were, "This is dog-dom's best kept secret. I had no idea what a wonderful breed of dog this is." He's very impressed. In the past he did field trials and was a field trial judge years ago, but he never got into conformation. In fact, his last dog was a mixed breed dog. I turned over a puppy to him and he's been showing her. He's been having a lot of fun with it and he's been winning with her.

In his very first AKC dog show, he took this puppy bitch and took Best of Breed with her on two consecutive days over multi-Group placing and winning specials and went on to a Group placement with her - his very first show! (laughter) I thought, "This is not fair!" (laughter) He's done really well. He has more to learn but if he stays with it for a while he's going to be a heck of a handler. He really has a knack for it. He's learning rapidly and I'm very proud of him.

What have you done for a living besides the grooming and the Samoyeds?

That's it. I started my own dog grooming business back in the '70s to support my Sammys solely. When we moved to Montana I expanded to a boarding kennel and dog grooming business. In Bend I expanded to a bigger dog grooming and boarding facility. (laughter) My whole life has pretty much gone to the dogs.

How have the dogs affected your lifestyle?

(laughter) My vehicles for years and years were bought with dogs in mind. Station wagon to van. I went to a motor home but then I went back to a van. I decided I prefer staying in a nice motel and having a van that got good gas mileage, versus the motor home. I had the motor home when I lived in Montana and the gas just about ate me up, the cost of keeping that motor home gassed up. (laughter) Of course the phone bill is big, people calling about dogs night and day. I've made a lot of really wonderful friends in dogs, and of course I've seen some of the worst elements in the human race in dogs, as well. (laughter) Not the worst, but some bad traits of human beings: jealousy, pettiness and meanness. A lot of people are really fun and they're good people, and I've made some wonderful friends.

What are some of the drawbacks of being in dogs?

If you are successful, you have a good name or you have winning dogs, you have to grow a pretty thick skin because all kinds of rumors fly around about you all the time. (laughter) Some of them are so unbelievable. It's so funny, some of the things that get back to me and to other people I know who are successful. The rumors that go around are just unbelievable. I guess it's like anything else. We wouldn't have *The Inquirer* if rumors didn't fly around about people. (laughter) Some of the gossip is really quite vicious.

Have there been benefits, as well?

Oh, yes. Travel. I've seen a lot of places, gone to a lot of places I probably wouldn't have if I hadn't been showing dogs. Good friends. Fun times. The dogs themselves, the love of the dogs and the joy of them. Of course, there's a lot of heartbreak, too, in losing a dog or something



Ch. Polar Mist Champagne on Ice.

happening to it, having a puppy born that has to be put down, losing a litter through some weird virus or parvo or something. I've had parvo a couple of times in litters and doing everything you can to save a puppy's life and seeing it suffer and die is really hard. Those are drawbacks. There are a lot of rewards, too, and it's fun. If you're competitive at all it's fun to get out there and have a nice dog that can win.

Has it been worth it?

Yes.

Do you have any favorite dog stories that you'd like to share?

I was at one of the Nationals once and there was a gal doing a brace in obedience. Right in the middle of an exercise, one of the dogs decided to get on the other one and start humping it. (laughter) It was pretty funny. I was showing one of my own dogs at one of the Nationals a couple

years ago and he decided he was supposed to rip my clothes off. He eventually got a standing ovation because he wouldn't stop. (laughter) Every time I tried to gait this dog he would grab hold of my skirt and start tug-of-war with me. He was having a good time. (laughter)

(laughter) That might be a reason to wear pants in the ring.

Right. I had a girlfriend who lost her skirt in the ring. She had a wrap-around skirt and it fell off, right in the ring. (laughter) I think I had two or three dogs, a cart, my wheels loaded up with crate and grooming stuff, and I was pulling it through a show building with my hands full of everything and my skirt came off and fell on the floor. Another time we were trying to get into a show building from a parking lot. I had dogs in each hand that had been in the

car for quite a long time, so they were full of vim and vigor and they got going a little too fast. There was a man standing in front of me with his back to me and all of a sudden the dogs in the left hand decided to go one way and the dogs in the right hand decided to go the other way. They went around the man and then they crossed, and it ended up with me hanging on to the dogs with my arms wrapped around this man! (laughter) I got him from the back. He had no idea what was happening. (laughter) Those are just a couple of stories. I'm sure there are many others.

Is there anything we haven't covered?

We've covered just about everything that I can think of. (laughter)

Thank you very much then. Thank you.