MARY FRANZ
TICA SOMALI BREED COMMITTEE CANDIDATE

My decision to run for the Somali Breed Committee position was to represent every Somali breeder in TICA and to open discussions of what we feel is important to continue our breed, for now, and for the FUTURE.

It is beneficial to have a representative on both the Somali and the Abyssinian Breed Committees. Someone that works with both breeds and understands the synergy the two breeds share. I have many years of experience with both breeds and the challenges they face.

To me the Somali is the longhaired Abyssinian and the elegance of our breed should be maintained. Decisions made should reflect the decision of the members, not from just one or two. Personally, I do not wish to see the Somali look like an Oriental cat, nor do I want to see the Somali revert to a shorter, rounder, “cobbier” style of cat. If elected to the Committee the issues I would like to bring into an open discussion are the issue of white in the undercoat of a dilute cat and definition of white on the neck, lower chin and whisker pads. The breed description could include clarification of these traits.

We are fortunate as a group to the have Abyssinian available as a genetic outcross. In my program I use the outcross often. This two-year process is necessary for the health, vigor and diversity of the Somali. My goal is to keep this remarkable breed healthy, with its amazing temperament, for many generations.

Another goal is to encourage new breeders in the US. I have mentored three new breeders in the US in addition to a new breeder in Russia, a new breeder in Brazil and a new breeder
in China. I have provided full support as a mentor and provided outstanding foundation cats to each of these catteries. I am available to any Somali breeder to answer questions or give advice regarding pedigrees, health or other issues that may arise.

Some information about my background and qualifications are: before starting my own program, I did two years of extensive research on the breed, attending cat shows and talking with breeders. I decided to go forward with a Somali breeding program and grateful for an amazing mentor. In 1985 the Tajhara Somali/Abyssinian Cattery was established.

My personal background includes diverse positions in Public Relations, Sales, and Marketing. My college course of study was Psychology.

I am an Officer and charter member of the TICA Surf 'N Turf Cat Club. For many years I have participated in large, gated events.

Recently in 2018 and 2019, Janis Garza, the owner of RW SGCA Tajhara Summer Samba, the only Somali in attendance, was presented at the "MEET THE BREEDS" event in New York City. Summer is from my cattery and always draws large crowds around her at any event. She truly shows off all the great personality traits of a Somali. Summer is also a certified therapy cat, of which I am proud and has participated in television news spots promoting upcoming TICA Cat Shows.

I attended the WAG conference in 2019 at the San Diego Convention Center. WAG is considered the ultimate PetCon for pet parents. I was a member of the TICA Booth and presented two Somalis at the two-day event.
I have designed and displayed a Somali Breed Booth at many of the gated shows staffed with a Somali “Pet Me” cat.

I enjoy going to cat shows very much and hearing the OHHH’s and AHHH’s for our flashy little foxes while carrying them through the show hall. I love when the guests follow me back to my benching area where I can share all the wonderful traits and antics the Somali possesses.

I have shown in nearly every Region of the US and in Columbia, France and the Netherlands. It was wonderful to meet in person many Somali breeders I have only spoken to online.

My achievements in the past few show seasons include Somali and Abyssinian International Breed Wins in the cat and kitten categories and multiple Regional Wins including two Best AB Kitten awards in the Southwest Region, an Aby and a Somali. I was presented a Lifetime Achievement Award in two show seasons with BW SGC Tajhara Obsession Confession.

I would like the opportunity to serve on the Somali Breed Committee Term 2021-2023 and invite you to contact me at tajhara@aol.com with any questions the breed section members may have.

Thank you. I truly value your vote.

Sincerely

Mary Franz
Tajhara Cattery