

Kerry Yancy Dolan, candidate for the Somali Breed Committee

I am pleased to run for a position on the Somali Breed Committee for the first time.

My Experience

Cats

In 1987, I attended my first cat show in Fort Worth, TX with a friend, and knew this was something I wanted to do. I began to show my Household Pet. At the second or third show, I saw a Somali for the first time. I was completely and irrevocably smitten. Within a few months, I had acquired an 8 month old ruddy, Planokats Dawao Bisad. His near lines included Lynn-Lee cats, the foundation of our breed. He earned Northeast Regional Wins for two years. In 1991, I purchased a kitten from the first pair of silver Somalis from Germany (Vonburchana) imported to the USA, Abristine Betr'n Houdini. I showed him in the New Breed and Color Class in TICA and ACFA for several years, including winning a coveted trophy at the Incats show in Los Angeles. At that time, we did not have enough cats for the color to advance. In 1995, I took a break from showing while my three children were young. I returned with two Turkish Van alters at my daughters' request. I searched and I got my foundation queen from lamcats in Massachusetts in 2006. She was bred to a Cedarwood Abyssinian at OhMy. I also obtained a Cedarwood stud and a Bayoufoxes stud, who was TICA International 2nd Best of Breed 2013-14. Through amazing connections on Facebook, I have become good friends with the breeders of the International Best of Breed that same year, Skeemen Tulip. His daughter is one of two queens in my home. I also have a Mysticpaws queen, a Skeemen stud, and a Lanacats stud, also. My cattery is HowlingCoyote, and I live in rural Texas.

I have shown these cats and several HHPs to Regional Wins, including two Household Pet Kitten International Wins with my son. My Lancets Ratibor of HowlingCoyote was TICA International Best Somali Kitten last year. My Skeemen Veresk of HowlingCoyote was 2nd Best of Breed Cat. HowlingCoyote Sam of Kayserai was 3rd Best of Breed Somali alter, too. I currently (10/15/17) bred and own this year's TICA Best of Breed Somali Cat and Alter. I am also showing an HHPK that is in the IW Top 25.

TICA Involvement

I have shown in at least 19 states and in every US Region except Mid Pacific. I have Somali breeder friends in several countries, both in TICA and other associations.

I am the President of the Turkish Van Cat Connection, a club in the South Central region, and a member in TIFS, and Feline Paw Foundation clubs. I share the duties of the South Central Junior Exhibitor Liason with two other members so we can do as much as possible for the children in our region. I have produced or helped with the Junior Exhibitors Rings at three Annual shows.

Professional

I have an undergraduate degree in biology. I am a pediatric emergency medicine physician. I understand feline health and genetics issues on a sophisticated level, yet I can explain these issues with degree of simplification necessary for a wide range of audiences.

I have served as both a Girl Scout and Cub Scout Leader for many years and on an alumni board for a decade. I am not currently participating in these actives.

My Goals

Preservation of Appearance

We have a beautiful and unique breed: a semi-longhair, ticked cat, that looks like a fox, with fabulous personality attributes. If one sees a photo or a silhouette of a Somali, it is instantly recognizable: “a **modified wedge** with **rounded contours**... a rise from the bridge of the nose to the forehead without a sharp break... ears large, alert, and moderately pointed, broad and cupped at the base and arched forward, set as though actively listening...the muzzle shall follow **gentle contours** in conformity with the head... chin shall be full..having a **rounded appearance**...profile **without flat planes**, showing gently curved transition between brow, nose, and muzzle..Torso is medium long, lithe, and graceful..rib cage is rounded with no **evidence of flat sides**.

I decided to run for breed committee because I am seeing the rapid “Orientification” of the Abyssinian in other organizations - **narrow** muzzle, more **extreme wedge**, **sharp contours**, and **flat planes**. The ears are moving too far to the sides and becoming an extension of the sides or a **triangle**.

The Leiden Zoological Museum in Holland has an exhibit of a stuffed Abyssinian purchased in 1834-1836 labeled "Patrie, domestica India". This cat's structure looks similar to the Abyssinian and Somalis that have been in the fancy for over a hundred and fifty years. I fear that some breeders are quickly moving away from that look. No other cats have the structure of the Abyssinian and Somali. Why do some want to change it?

Improvement and Healthier lines

Feline genetics is evolving rapidly. We can now test for many disorders and more tests are in development. We can screen for pyruvate kinase deficiency, premature retinal atrophy, and others. Amyloidosis is being studied. Some believe we are about to have a breakthrough Feline Infectious Peritonitis susceptibility and treatment. It is our duty as responsible breeders to do our best to test for these entities and eliminate them from our lines to the best of our ability. We should never bundle potential heartbreak with a kitten sale.

Genetic Diversity

With the advent of the Internet and particularly social media, we can become acquainted with Somali breeders around the world. This aids our breed in many ways, especially in the ability to increase the gene pools in any given cattery. When done responsibly and with forethought, importing genetically sound cats can benefit lines for generations to come. TICA is an international association and we can easily become friends. Cats can be transported between continents and everyone benefits.

Visibility

Why is the most beautiful breed often met with. “What kind of cat is that? I have never seen one. It is so beautiful!” The public just does not know about our beloved Somalis. Many exhibitors of other breeds do not know the basics of our standard. Education will benefit everyone. Several of us display self-made breed posters at shows. Perhaps we should create some standardized materials that can be used by anyone to answer those

comments. Let's display breed posters. Let's be visible at TICA booths at Pet Fairs and Veterinary Conferences. One of my kittens will be making appearances with the TICA Marketing Department at many of these events starting soon.

Let's Act Now

Let's verify the standard we want and educate the judges what a Somali should look like. A fabulous coat, color, and ticking can easily sway a judge who just doesn't know the standard well enough to notice structure that is not ideal. We are a minority breed. I often say that judges may not know a good one when seen if they don't know the standard well and have not seen enough Somalis. Let's get more good Somalis into the show ring. Let's encourage more people who purchase our kittens to try showing, even if just once. Perhaps we can offer to reimburse the entry fee. Let's create an informative breed presentation that can be shown to judges, exhibitors, and spectators. Above all, let's do our best to continue to improve the health of our breed while maintaining the delightful "flying squirrel genius" personality. I would love to lead our Somali Breed Section in these efforts.