

SIAMESE BREED COUNCIL NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2010

This year was a banner year for Siamese in the show ring, and a possible tragedy for the future of the breed politically. Let's start with the banner year.

Seal point males ruled the show ring this year. Of the top ten Siamese in Championship, six were seal point males. There was also one other male, a lovely blue point. That says a lot, to have seven males in the top ten with a standard written for the girls. All of these boys also obtained a RW, with the one at the top, GC BW NW Thaifong Rio of Ayuthaya, bred and owned by Virginia Wheeldon and Susan Perkins, earning 6th Best Cat Nationally. Only three females found their way into our top ten.

Our top cat, know to his friends simply as Rio, is an absolutely stunning boy, elegant, refined and one who enjoyed the show ring. He started his year in May and never looked back. Even with the outstanding cats that came along later, he was never challenged. He stood out among a group of excellent seal point males, affirming his top stature.

Kittens and Premiership winners were more diverse in color than the Championship cats, although males dominated the top ten again. A lovely chocolate point girl, completing the last of the four colors of National Winners for Dee Johnson and Connie Roberts, captured the top kitten spot. GC NW San-Toi's Dare To Dream of Kadabra, co-owned with Linda Carlson, is the 15th Best Kitten Nationally. Two of the top ten kittens, GC, RW Blue Isles Jimmybuffett of Tyjunsee and GC, RW Maryk's Senator Al Franken, also received top ten Championship awards. "The Senator" also doubled in the Southern Region, earning regional awards in both the kitten and championship categories. GC RW Katsmith Glitter In The Air, the second best kitten, followed in his mother's footsteps, who was also second best kitten the year she was shown.

Premiership was very competitive this year. The Best Cat, GP RW Shimasu's Ghostzapper, was not determined until the next to last weekend. Ghost was in close competition with GP, RW Thaifong Peru of Ayuthaya and GP, RW Acatamiaward M.V.P. for most of the show season. Two cats also deserve special mention for having won regional awards in several show seasons, GP, RW Minghou Native Dancer of Tayohme and GP, RW Pattam's Night Moves. Both sealpoint boys (go figure!) have defied the old standard that says a Siamese only has one show season by doing well year after year.

The Breakfast was very nice this year. The decorations were done by Teresa Hotz, and were lovely flower arrangements. Sybil Zaden ordered the rosettes for us, and they were particularly lovely. Kathryn Brady and Virginia Wheeldon worked on the booklet and the ordering of the awards, which turned out very well. Susan Perkins has done another incredible painting which was raffled off, with the drawing of the winning ticket done at the National Siamese Cat show. The lucky recipient of this drawing is Nancy Frank. The raffle raised \$625.00, which will benefit special projects for National Siamese Cat Club and the Siamese Breed Council.

Joan Reesor gave a fascinating talk on Fading Kitten Syndrome, which included many useful tips on managing a weak kitten. The entire talk has been uploaded to the Siamese Breed Council website, so be sure to take the time to read it.

The Breed Council, for the second time in the history of the award, bestowed our very special "Friend of the Siamese" award, which went to Mary Kolencik. This award is given to an individual who goes above and beyond in some effort that could greatly affect the Siamese breed. The first award was given at the Pittsburgh Annual in 2001, and went to Diana Doernberg. Diana worked so valiantly on the definition of breeds policy, or what became known as "What Is A Breed", a policy, which if applied by the CFA Board, would have protected the Siamese breed from ever having cats from another breed shown in our breed. Diana's work on this policy cost her Board

seat, but should have forever more protected our breed and the Siamese BC awarded her the first "Friend of the Siamese" in recognition of her efforts.

Mary Kolencik crafted two amendments to the constitution this year, which would have closed the loop hole which now allows the Board to not ask Breed Councils for input on changes that greatly affect the breeds, by passing them using registration and show rules. Mary worked many many hours on her resolutions, consulted with many people throughout CFA and brought to the Annual meeting air tight amendments that should have been passed without objection (more later on this). For her tireless dedication the Siamese Breed Council has awarded Mary the second "Friend of the Siamese" award, and our many thanks for all the hard work she put into making our breed safer. Susan Perkins donated the award, a beautiful framed original painting of "the Senator".

Our wonderful Breakfast followed what was a devastating Board meeting and election. We lost three champions of our breed and of CFA in the election, Debbie Kusy, Nancy Petersen and Carissa Altschul. The people elected in the other regions are not "purists" or even in some cases even majorly committed to CFA. One person has a wife who is a TICA judge. Two of the elections were decided by one or two people who controlled a majority of paper clubs. It's not a pretty picture.

The Board meeting was also a huge disappointment. The amendments Mary Kolencik worked so hard on were never fully discussed. People were getting up and down, wandering out to get snacks, talking among themselves. You never knew who was in the room or when the vote would be called on something. We all know that the way the vote was counted was changed in the middle of a count, something that put into question the basic integrity of the meeting.

The one bright spot for us seems to be the new president Jerry Hamza. One of his first appointments was Diana Doernberg to the head of Breeds and Standards, a decision that we should all thank him for. He is also determined to focus on the financial crisis that is affecting CFA to the exclusion of all else, and does not intend to allow the distraction of breed issues to interfere with that focus. This will give us some breathing room to try and elect new people to the CFA Board who are less focused on turning CFA into TICA.

The Oriental BC is determined to move forward with their march on other breeds. This year they are asking the Board to allow LH variants with colors of the CPSH to be shown in CPSH classes. If they gain this, they will be back the following year asking for something else. Bit by bit they are grinding down the CPSH breed on their way to a takeover. Then they can incorporate the Bali/Javi breed, and then, unless they consider the Siamese breed too valuable to them as a genetic resource, they will be after us. They won't stop until they have absorbed as much as their gluttonous breed can take in. How they got so important and so much more powerful than the breeders of CPSH and Bali/Javi, I can't say. Why they get to run over other breeds who have been recognized by CFA longer than themselves, I can't say. But the Board this year is primed to give them everything they ask for. And even if by some miracle the Oriental BC doesn't vote to pass this, the Board will go around the Breed Councils again and simply hand them what they want using show rules. I'm sure they have planned for this already. Even if our President does not support this type of maneuver, there are plenty of Board members who will, certainly more than enough to outvote the President.

For our near future, I will once again put the outcross cutoff on our ballot. I do believe that the Siamese breed should say who uses our breed, not the Oriental breed. I believe that all breeds should be able to determine who uses their breed as an outcross. That should surely be a basic right that a breed retains. We need to vote on it and pass it strongly once again, this year and every year. We need to keep the Board focused on the way the Oriental breeders use other breeds and their voracious appetite for gobbling up other breeders' hard work.

I also hope that the amendments written to bring the relationship between breed councils and the Board into balance will come back next year. They are so simple and straight forward, and basic to the relationship that should exist between breed councils and the Board, they deserve a full discussion.

And I hope that some brave people will find their voices and come forward to speak for traditional CFA. It hasn't been our conservative approach to how we define a breed that has us in economic troubles; it's the entire economy's woes, and the fact that we have not fully exploited the growing importance of cats in the lives of American families.

Maybe this will be a wake-up call for all of us. These elections matter. Breeds are not a small part of a candidate's position, they the center of his/her position. The Cat Fancy exists to promote in some fashion or other cat breeds, and the way someone feels about breeds should be the first thing that we examine before voting for that person.

We can help our chances of survival by one, supporting Jerry Hamza in his efforts to solve our financial crisis and two, finding good people of conservative values who believe that CFA has the right approach when it comes to breeds and supporting them for the Board. We have a narrow window to turn this around.

On a different note, I will be stepping down as Breed Council Secretary. Virginia Wheeldon is running for the position, and I hope that you will all support her as she takes over in this time of great uncertainty. I have served for ten years and am finding that I have less and less time to spend on the tasks of our council, which is one of the busiest and most challenging of all the Breed Councils.

It has been a great privilege to have served this past decade. Although I am frustrated and sorry that CFA has never instituted measures that would totally protect the Siamese breed, we have made major strides in getting recognition for the Siamese as a breed. When I began this odyssey over ten years ago, there was growing consensus, created through the mis-information distributed by the then Oriental BCS, Bob Agresta, that the Siamese and Oriental cat were the same except for color. In the beginning we had to fight hard against this idea, and re-establish the fact that the Siamese cat is truly a unique breed, and the Oriental was only attempting to copy what had existed for centuries. It was an uphill battle, as Mr. Agresta was an aggressive dictatorial personality used to getting his own way, and had lots of ears on the then Board. At one time he had even forced his rationalization for demands that the Oriental cat be shown in all pointed colors, or that the breeds be combined, on our Siamese ballots. We truly started from scratch by introducing CFA, its members and its Board, to the true nature of the Siamese cat, as one of the foundation breeds of CFA. Today it's widely accepted that the CFA Siamese is a separate breed, and our fight has shifted from the Oriental breeders trying to combine the two breeds to them trying to show colors that look like ours, all the while using Siamese to create these colors. It's still a huge battle, but at least CFA considers us a breed worth saving now, if only for our gene pool.

We didn't stop at just fighting for our breed though, we also worked very hard to create one of the most active and honored breed councils in CFA. We give top ten awards that are the envy of breeders in every other council, and people compete for those awards. I believe that the competition for our awards has helped us to breed better cats, allowing the quality of Siamese to rise to very high levels in CFA. We often have multiple cats competing hard to get into the top ten, whether it be championship, kitten or premiership. Exhibitors pay attention to their placements, and will bring cats out for further showing rather than risk losing a chance to be in the top ten. No other breed council has such fierce competition for its breed awards.

We also have special awards for notable Siamese breeders and lovers of the breed, such as the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Friend of the Siamese Award. Sponsorship of our top ten and color awards was introduced about nine years ago, and has been very successful, with

friends sponsoring their friends cats, and many times squabbling over who gets which cat. The sponsorship is very competitive in and of itself! Individual breeders and Siamese breed clubs have sponsored special awards, such as the Jeanne Singer award for Best Cat in Championship, which honors one of the most influential Siamese breeders of the past 100 years, or the Carolyn Bullota award given to Best Bluepoint in Championship in remembrance of a special Judge and Siamese breeder.

This is a short list of all we have done over the last ten years:

- Fund not one but two Breast Cancer Research Studies, raising \$15,000 for the Winn Foundation.
- Host interesting and informative speakers annually at the Siamese Breed Council Breakfast. We have speakers on such wide ranging topics as liver problems and creating a will to care for your animals in event you are unable.
- Raise funds to help with the cost of rescue for several cases of Siamese cats found to be in less than desirable living situations.
- Celebrate the 100 year Anniversary of the Siamese breed in CFA as no other Breed Council did. When CFA achieved its 100 year anniversary in 2006, the Siamese breed council created and distributed special breed awards to all large shows to honor the 100 years of registration of the breed by CFA. We had a special dinner at the Annual that year, with Betty White giving a stirring speech on the history of the breed, and Virginia Wheeldon creating a pictorial timeline of famous Siamese.
- The passing of the 8 generation pedigree requirement, which protects Siamese from the introduction of pointed Orientals from other associations into our gene pool.
- Creation of a PowerPoint breed presentation for presentation at Judging Workshops that is the model used for all breeds now.
- Creation of a pedigree database of all Siamese cats that is available to all Siamese breeders. This was maintained for many years by Mike Franks, who was responsible for putting together the initial thousands of pedigrees, and is now in the loving care of Kris Willison.
- Creation of a Siamese Breed Council website where the Top Ten winners are featured and stored by year, with historical articles archived and other information important to our breed can be found.
- Creation of a fabulous Breed Booth that has won awards several times at the International Cat Show. The graphics were created by Ron DeWilde, a professional graphic artist and Virginia Wheeldon, a talented designer. Our Breed Booth is truly beautiful and professional.
- An artistic and fun booth at the first Meet The Breeds event, representing Lady and the Tramp. The booth was designed by Mary Kolencik and Melissa Horn, and through their efforts a Siamese was voted the "Cat Idol" and was featured on several television shows, as the public's choice for the best breed present.

These are only some of the major things that have been initiated over the past ten years. You should all be proud of the achievements of your Breed Council. I doubt highly that CFA has another BC as active and as involved with their breed as we have been. Our contributions to CFA are well beyond those of any other breed, and our intense loyalty both to CFA and to the Siamese breed is well known and admired.

All this work did not happen on its own. So I would like to thank all of you for stepping up and taking on the work of this Council over the years. And I would particularly like to thank the following people: Mary Kolencik and Betty White, whose sage advice has been so helpful in negotiating the political challenges, Virginia Wheeldon, whose website skills and creative talents have made our website one of the best in CFA, Kathryn Brady, who has handled many of the challenges that have come with our awards each year, Sybil Zaden, Carolyn Self and Ann Marie Bingham for their parts in the annual awards. Susan Beuerlein, whose artist creativity gave us the wonderful booklet at our special 100 Anniversary Awards banquet.

So I feel that while I am leaving with the future of the Siamese breed still in a precarious position, I am also leaving the Breed Council in a much stronger position than it was ten years ago. The strength of our accomplishments can only strengthen the position of the Siamese cat and help gain it the protection it deserves. All of you just need to continue to carry forward the passion for this breed that has made all of this possible. It has been a real privilege and joy to have served this council for so long. I hope all of you will continue to work as hard and remain as dedicated over the next ten years to this most wonderful and amazing breed that we all love so well, the incredible elegant Siamese.

Sincerely,
Debbi Stevenson