

*Artic Luv Alaskan Malamutes  
USA, Since 1971*



*Artic Luv's Sin City*

***Owned by:  
Bernadette Quercio-Traxler***

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## Background & Early Dogs

### **Q. How & when did you get started in Malamutes?**

A. I was newly married and moved here to California from New Jersey. We went to a pet shop and saw this little paperback book about Alaskan Malamutes written by Charles Berger. That is how I learned about the breed with this little paper back. It was the first and only book written and in print at the time about this breed. The year was 1971. Not too long after that we went to a swap meet and there was a big black and white M'Loot dog in the bed of a pick-up truck. The person who owned that dog told us he had puppies from the dog and that they were not too far from our home.

Two weeks after we got this puppy (*Charo*), the breeders came to our home and asked if we wanted to go to a practice match. At that point in time I was also introduced to Cindy Foster's mom and aunt who had owned the female before leasing her to these other people. Cindy's mother and aunt showed me how to train my puppy and we all went to the match. The brother to my female went BOS to her brother BOB...at that time the practice matches out here in California had entries of 500 dogs all breeds. The Alaskan Malamute entry at this match was about 35. I was introduced to Jan Shelton of *Frostwind* Kennels, who had *Kodara/Pak N Pull* dogs. Jan use to have all of us over to her home where we talked dogs and of course, training classes. This is when I entered the show venue and got hooked.



*Charo Queen of Alaska*

### **Q. What was it about you, your background or lifestyle that made you choose this breed?**

A. What attracted me to the Alaskan Malamute was the beauty of the markings and the size, a strong looking dog.

### **Q. Who was your first dog and/or bitch? What activities did you do with them?**

A. My first Alaskan Malamute was a female, *Charo Queen of Alaska*. *Charo* was M'loot and *Kodara* and stood 24 inch at the shoulders. I was only interested in the conformation shows and nothing more. I had the fever for those ribbons.

## Breeding Experience

### **Q. Tell us about your foundation dogs, mentors & early breeding experiences.**

A. There was a Chd litter out of *Charo* off-spring, P 4. After that happened, I went to *Pak N Pull* and *Kodara* test bred stock. I purchased a daughter of *Ch. Pak N Pull's Kodiak Attu* and under the direction of DC Dillingham I bred *Attu's* daughter *Kipmik Spanky* to her half-brother. He was bred by Pat Taylor and she owned a female out of Bob Carsten's dog *Ch. Carmel Kodiak Kaniq* and that female was bred to *Ch. Pak N Pull's Kodiak Attu* and she had a male from that breeding named *Kenai*. From that breeding came *Ch. Artic Luv's Swashbuckler, ROM*. This, of course, is still heavy on what I am doing today. At this point in time, DC and Dorothy Dillingham were my mentors. They consistently bred what they wanted and I wanted to do the same.



*Ch. Artic-Luv's Swashbuckler, ROM "Flynn"*

**Q. What did your foundation dogs contribute/lack? What would you have changed?**

A. The *Kodara/Pak N Pull* dogs were lacking angulation and the *Kotzebue* added to it. I did disappoint the Dillingham's (original *Tigara*) by not going with their dogs completely. What I regret is I should have purchased a male and bitch from the original *Tigara* and incorporated them into what I had at that time. But as things worked out, I did later on go to the *Kotzebue*.



*Ch. Pak N Pull's Kodiak Attu*

**Q. Were some combinations or bloodlines unsuccessful?**

A. Along the way before the *Kotzebue*, I did breed into a different line, which was a mistake. I got parrot bites, monorchids and dogs that moved unsoundly. I wasted a few years there because once again I had to search for what I wanted.

**Q. What combinations or bloodlines were successful?**

A. The *Kodara /Pak N Pull* dogs did lack some merit, I needed better feet and dogs that could cover ground. That is when my trip to the East for a month of shows introduced me to Candy and Bob Monteheard , Terry Sewell, Rich Harrison, Ken Hyatt and a few others. I also saw the magnificent *Kotzebues* of New England. Everything I needed was there!

**Q. What were/are your top considerations when breeding?**

A. First consideration for breeding is breed type and soundness of the dogs physical and mentally sound.

**Q. What advice would you give to new breeders today?**

Go to many kennels and see the dogs. Do not listen to the gossip, weed through that and look at dogs and pedigrees. Discuss the dogs and their breeding programs, listen to what they have to say and make the decision about the knowledge of the person. Really study those pedigrees and what those dogs look like. Many have lost correct solid breed type.

## Your Years in the Breed

**Q. What was the breed like when you started?**

A. When I started into the breed there were breeders with the numbers in their yard. They had lines with a genetic bank that could reproduce what they wanted.

**Q. What do you feel the breed is like today?**

A. Today I see a lot of open pedigrees. I think we are backwards in our health issues. The issues have gotten worse because people thought we were safe with paper clearances and now we are facing 400 dogs (that we know of) that are affected by their ChD certificates being pulled. What bothers me the most is that many were not around back when they knew the ChD program was band aid until something better could be used or come along for our clearances. We had to work with a number that the breeders would agree upon. 5 out of a dwarf to clear, but we really needed 25 out of a dwarf. 10 out of a carrier, but we really needed 50 out of a carrier. We all knew this and the numbers we worked with was a good indication, not a Full Proof Safe!



*BIS Ch. J-Len's Tribute to Mundy "Binx"*

**Q. What would you say has changed from then to now? What were some of the problems facing Malamutes and Malamute breeders when you first started? Would you say we have overcome those problems? If not, what are your suggestions to overcome them?**

**A.** Back in the 70's our problem with the breed was Hips and ChD and that was all. Due to environmental changes we are facing more defects with our breed. These dogs are no longer the strong work horses of the Arctic, in my opinion. They are weaker, with health issues and some are losing type. Not enough substance and the traits they are known for are gone, i.e. big bone, feet, nice heads with small ears and almond shaped eyes, thick harsh coats and some do not cover ground. To me, some look like coyotes. I feel that our breed is on the downhill with health and the overall breeding program of many people.

Years ago you were able to look in the show ring and know what line they were, what breeder it came from and really see a lot of quality dogs. Years ago we had many kennels with the numbers of dogs to continue to breed quality. Today, because of zoning, costs, and of course the Animal Rights movement, not only is our breed at stake but every purebred dog. We see a lot of poor quality in many of the breeds today. In my opinion, once again it is the result of a lack of mentoring. I was mentored by several people not just one. The Dillingham's were my major mentor when it came to the breeding formula or system. Martha Guiffree from *Pak N Pull*, Sam Maranto who owned *Cochise of Husky Pak*, and not to forget my dear friend Corky Vroom, who was one of the top handlers of all time, were also among my mentors.

Corky's method of mentoring was intimidation with me. He figured I was a thick headed Italian from New Jersey. This continued from the the 70's until he passed away. But years past, Dorothy Dillingham told me she was sorry for how tough she was on me. I told her it was worth it. But all those breeders back then were made of leather, tough like our dogs are supposed to be!

**Q. Who was your "favorite" Malamute of all time that was not from your own kennel? What did you like about this dog?**

**A.** It is really hard to pick just one. *Ch. Tigara's Torch of Arctic ROM*, *Ch. Kodara's Kodiak of Erowah, ROM*, *Ch. Kiwalik Kip* (Ken Hyatt owned him), *Ch. J Len's Arctic Windjammer* and *Ch. Pak N Pull's Kodiak Attu*.

One of the Gabriel's dogs I really liked, I forgot his name. Eileen would know who I am talking about. Hobb's that the Grefe's owned that Ron bred and there are a few more, so it is hard to pick one! All these dogs were sound with good breed type and they were line bred to be the correctness they were that the AKC Standard, the blue print of the breed, explains that our breed should be! Not what many people think it should be!



*Ch. J Len's Arctic Windjammer, "Woofers"*

**Q. Who was your favorite Malamute from your own kennel? What did you like about this dog?**

**A.** My favorite Alaskan Malamute from my kennel....that is not a fair question? When you breed them and you hold them when they are just born and they live here for life, you bond with these dogs. They are part of you. Whether they are Champions or not. Many of my bitches were not shown, they were the back bone of some of my best dogs and they were used to produce to make this line strong and to be consistent! I was mentored that way and I stuck to it!

**Q. Who is the most influential malamute from your kennel? Why?**

A. The most influential dog from this kennel was *Ch. Artic Luv's Swashbuckler, ROM*, a.k.a. Flynn. He was a product of a half brother/sister breeding that laid the foundation for me to breed consistently. Behind him was *Ch. Pak N Pulls Kodiak Attu* twice and *Ch. Kodara Kodiak Of Erowah* 4 times, then from there *Kobuk's Dark Beauty*, *Husky Pak Erok* and *Cochise of Husky Pak*, which in turn went back to *Ch. Toro of Bras Coupe* (Kotzebue). This helped me line breed from the East Coast dogs that were line bred up from Husky Pak and of course going into the Kotzebue. On paper all of this looked like out crossing and I have been line breeding all of these years. I stuck with it and did not go with the flavor of the day!

**Q. What do you think are the best things about Malamutes today or how have they changed/improved?**

A. In my opinion, the temperaments have improved.....when walking to a show ring years ago and it was a crowd in the aisle to get to your ring. All you had to say was I am coming through with a Malamute, it was like the parting of the red sea. Those M'Loot dogs were strong and challenging.

A short story, one of the handlers assistant had to walk a dog to the ring because the handler had several malamutes to show. The dog went under the girls skirt and was growling. By the time the girl got to the ring she was white as a sheet, she could not get the dog from under her skirt and she was afraid she could not control him. All was good when she got to the handler. Can you imagine, walking with a dog growling and where he was?



*Ch. Artic-Luv's Red Jake*

**Q. What do you think are the biggest problems?**

A. Our biggest problem is our defects and Animal Rights. The Animal Rights issue is the fault of the people not paying attention to what their dangerous agenda is! Most are tired of hearing about these laws being passed against domestic animals and they think it does not concern them. If you own just one purebred dog, Folks it concerns you! The defects are secondary at this point in time, but they need to be addressed after we beat the AR Agenda of destroying all animal contact with humans.

## **Parting Thoughts**

**Q. Is there anything else you wish to share?**

A. During my time in this breed I could write a real thick book of the fun times and all the people from all walks of life that I have met from breeding and owning this breed. My only advice is, after having almost 43 years of my life dedicated to these dogs, all of us need to protect this breed and not worry about these others who use it to gain their spot on the ego trip or use it as a control issue which many do not have the knowledge to control anything! The hidden agenda of wanting to get that ribbon and the Politics has hurt this breed beyond that I ever thought would happen. So please think about that. Thank you for reading this very long story.

*Bernadette Quercio-Traxler*