



# Bob and Dolly aWard

## Nomination - Andi Mast

It is a difficult to translate into words the impact that Andi Mast had on the people and the Sammys that had the privilege to cross her path.

Words which I believe best describe Andi are: Caring, Funny, Hard-working, Patient, Smart, Accountable, Devoted, Exuberant, Loyal, Encouraging, Mentor, Supportive, Compassionate, Professional and Loving.

Andi was a leader in the Denver Samoyed Association for over 20 years. She held many key positions and helped further the club's mission of advancing the Samoyed breed, in particular in the performance events like Agility, Obedience and Rally, and protecting the breed, by chairing for 20 years the Sammy Rescue Committee.

- President:**  
1997
- Vice President:**  
2004, 2013-2017
- Recording Secretary**  
1992-1994, 2002, 2003, 2005
- Corresponding Secretary**  
2015-2017
- Board Member**  
1998, 2008-2009
- Specialty Chairperson**  
2003
- Tournament Chairperson**  
1994, 1996
- Liaison to SCA Chairperson**  
2004-2005
- Agility Trial Principal Volunteer**  
2004-2017
- Sammy Rescue Chairperson**  
1998-2017 (19 years)

Andi's impact on the Samoyed community was far-reaching. From the simplest things like welcoming new people at a club meeting, to assisting and encouraging people like myself when I took on new volunteer jobs for the club. I remember how nervous I was publishing the first "Sam-O-Gram" newsletter issue when I took over the editor position. She helped me by proofreading every issue until I felt more comfortable with the job. Then when I became the treasurer, she helped me set up the books, with budgets and reports aligned by committee, so we could more easily see how money was earned and spent and whether our events were successful or not. She also served to audit the treasurer books for many years.

Some of these efforts required hours of work, and are not glamorous jobs, but were supporting efforts to the club as a whole, to help serve our Samoyed community. The efforts are rarely recognized compared to other more notable achievements, but it is what

made our club a well-oiled machine. Andi was one of the workhorses in our club, that you could count on for help, leadership, participation and great attitude at every club event, activity and meeting.

She also believed strongly in following the published parliamentary procedures of the club and did her best to help keep the club on track. Again, another necessary evil, but in the end it facilitated good communication within the club, and clearly defined the rules that the club members followed.

*Andi Mast*



1959 - 2017

Although, Andi did not exhibit in the conformation ring, she co-owned multiple dogs with Martha Lageschulte and

loved grooming her dogs to perfection and cheer them on to multiple successes in the show ring!

Andi was a joy to watch in the obedience and rally ring. She attained many titles in this event, but most of all watching her and the bond she shared with her dogs was inspiring. Perhaps because she didn't take herself too seriously, and as a result, her dogs seemed more relaxed while going through their exercises. She also was so encouraging to others in this sport, including me. In my most recent trial, she would text me every 15-30 minutes, up until we entered the obedience ring, giving me little tips, or to simply to remind me to smile. It worked, we qualified two days in a row to earn our title and one of our best scores! I just so appreciated her taking that time, and genuinely wanting us to succeed.

When agility entered in our collective DSA world, Andi and her husband Bob took to it, like fish to water. Andi was instrumental in helping DSA earn our AKC license to hold an agility trial, by helping us put on a near perfect Sanctioned A Agility Match in 2002. The match was so well run, AKC allowed us to bypass holding a second match! Andi and Bob loved the sport, they loved the sense of community, they loved to see their dogs excel, and more times than not, worked the entire day, and both days of a trial, at

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The  
Heart  
of  
the  
Denver  
Samoyed  
Association



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not only the DSA 2-day trial, but the majority of the all-breed agility trials they entered. Andi was beloved by the agility community as was evident by their outpour of support at our DSA agility trial, just one weekend after she passed. It was a difficult weekend for our club, but we all took great comfort being with each other and listening to others share their personal stores of Andi.



Within DSA, Andi's name is synonymous with Denver Samoyed Rescue, a committee she chaired for 20 years. This was one of her top passions in her life. She was deeply committed to its mission.

Denver Samoyed Rescue started in 1993 by Heidi Nieman and Carolyn Bateman. Andi became a co-chair with Deb Castro in 1998. Andi brought her business acumen and professionalism to rescue. By 1997, DSR was helping place 40-50 Samoyeds a year, that came from Colorado, but also our surrounding states like Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Wyoming where no Samoyed rescue groups exists, even to this day. The volunteer and financial resources to help that many dogs in a year was significant, and at one point overreached the committee's capacity. In response, Andi along with Deb, helped formulate DSR Guidelines that were presented to the DSA Board and approved. The guidelines were very well-thought out, addressing how the committee operated, the job duties, the case-by-case decision process on helping a dog, and commitment to adhering to state regulations and the club. At this time, rescue was not a popular concept, but Andi wanted to make sure the committee remained part of a club and not be a separate group outside of DSA. This document was another example of Andi's good business sense, and desire for clear communication

within the club. The resultant synergy has been very positive for our club.

Andi participated in all facets of the rescue committee. This included fundraisers: Barnes & Noble gift wrapping station, PetsMart Santa Pet Pictures, Beer & Brats Fundraiser Night, and most importantly began the relationship with Sheree Bye of White Pine, to first provide good collars and leashes to our adopted dogs but also sell as a fundraiser. That fundraiser has kept our program alive for all these years. It is our primary source of financial assistance.

Andi also helped organize the grooming seminar we had for our rescue families with Martha Lageschulte as the instructor. (<http://denversamoyed.org/DSRGroom.htm>) Grooming a spay/neuter coat has its own challenges!

She participated in the rewrite of all our adoption and foster contracts, to abide by the state requirements, plus provide DSR a necessary paper trail. She interviewed prospective adopters, checked veterinarian references, performed home checks, transported dogs, and helped groom dogs. She also mentored new volunteers in how to perform the interviews and reference checks. However, one of the things that Andi did best, was handle the difficult phone calls in a wide variety of contexts. She had an incredible knack of being able to separate herself from the emotions in the phone call. She handled situations with such tact and diplomacy and many times turned the situation around for the positive. My biggest regret is I did not listen in on some of the phone calls to learn from Andi, and incorporate some of her techniques.

Most importantly, Andi had a deep compassion for all the rescue dogs. She treated them with dignity, and respect. She and Bob ended up adopting a pair of Samoyeds, Abner and Daisy, that simply were not finding a home because of their age and medical issues. They lived out their golden years with Andi knowing what true love meant.

Andi also coined the term "Our Special Project Dog" when we had a dog that required extra financial means to help turn them around medically or through behavior training. Her term gave us "permission" to spend the extra money without overwhelming concern about budget. One dog of late was Yukon, who was adopted out three times by the local shelter only to be returned because of his "slight limp". His slight limp turned out to be a completely destroyed hip, requiring a total hip replacement. As Andi would say, "Just so glad we were in the position to help".

Andi's last rescue dog that she helped was Ollie. She received a call from a Delta, Colorado shelter to help a 3 year old male that they thought was a Samoyed. When we received the pictures of him, he looked completely shaven down, including his tail. There were two tufts

of white hair on his body and a curled tail. We all took a leap of faith and hoped there was a Samoyed in there somewhere and offered to accept the dog into our program. He was transported to Denver the first week in January.

Andi and I met at the foster mom's home to meet Ollie. He was confident, happy and completely content to lay down in the dog bed once he greeted all of us. It was at that time Andi asked us to name him, as he didn't have a known name, and we all came up with Ollie.

That was the last day I got to see and talk with Andi in person. She was sick with what seemed like a horrific cold. Less than two weeks later, Andi had passed away.

Ollie's journey had just begun as we learned he had Sebaceous Adenitis. Parts of me were worried if we would ever find Ollie a home, but the other part of me knew Andi was his guardian Angel. On June 4th, Ollie was adopted by his foster mom, and I had no doubt that was Andi's doing.

It is an understatement to say that Andi's presence in our 'Samoyed lives' including our monthly club meetings and various club events, will be missed greatly. She was a big part of our history and family. She shared our passion for this beautiful breed. She worked tirelessly to protect the breed, but also to give us and herself, opportunities to enjoy our dogs, and in the process, each other too. Andi Mast helped elevate our organization from a Samoyed club, to a supportive, energetic, and caring community of individuals who just happened to love the same dog breed. Andi, was a benefit of membership, in the Denver Samoyed Association.

We will miss Andi, and we will never forget her.

Sincerely,

Thalia Peletis  
DSA and SCA Member

Grateful  
for  
Andi

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