



## *History of the Vantastix Cat Club*

by Karen L. Hooker, Pairedocs Turkish Vans, Vantastix Secretary 1992-1998

The Vantastix Cat Club was accepted as a Cat Fanciers Association (CFA) Breed Club in 1992. What follows is some background on the club, the basis for its formation, and some of the highlights. Why did we seek acceptance of Vantastix as a CFA-recognized club in 1992? At that time it was our opinion that by establishing a CFA breed club, we would be able to better facilitate the unified promotion of the Turkish Van amongst CFA breeders. The breed had been in miscellaneous status (5-year requirement) since 1988, and it was imperative that all breeders worked together to ensure that the many requirements for advancement to championship status were met. The majority of the cats/kittens that were registered and shown at that time were by members of Vantastix. We had an informal network set up but due to not being officially recognized by CFA, we were operating in somewhat of an information void. Vantastix was proposed to serve as a resource for all breeders to keep informed of the status of the breed, showing requirements, upcoming CFA Board meetings and presentations, and to delegate necessary actions.

Although the club was initially turned down on its first application, members did not give up. The application materials were strengthened and re-submitted in March 1992, followed by a letter writing campaign to Board members. At the June 1992 CFA annual meeting in Seattle, Washington, the Vantastix Turkish Van breed club was accepted as a new club in the Southern Region. Debbie Rexelle (President) represented Vantastix at this meeting. Although many informational mailings had been done on an as-needed basis over the previous years, the first "official" Vantastix newsletter was published on August 3, 1992.

Following acceptance of Vantastix as a CFA-affiliated club, members were busy showing their cats to meet requirements for the advancement of the Turkish van to provisional status, the next step before advancement to championship status. At the CFA Board meeting held on February 13, 1993, the provisional proposal prepared by members of Vantastix passed unanimously. Vantastix members Debbie Rexelle (President), Deborah Hayes (Treasurer), and Doug Williams were in attendance. Individual Vantastix members who could not attend contributed materials and money for cage curtains and the breed display.

During the course of the next year, Vantastix members were very busy ensuring that we got out as many cats as possible to be registered and judged, covering all regions of the country. On February 13, 1994 (exactly one year later) in Dallas, Texas the CFA Board voted unanimously to advance the Turkish Vans to Championship Status beginning in the 1994-95 show season, successfully culminating six years of hard work by the Vantastix membership. We had an excellent display, great food, toys, and of course, cats! Ten cats were attendance along with their owners, Vantastix members Ann Van Brunt, Marty Low-Swan, Dusty Rainbolt, Weems Hutto, Deborah Hayes, and Karen Hooker. New breeder, Linda Gorsuch, was also in attendance with her cat. We did a "Vantastix" (ha!) job of putting on the display for our championship proposal (which is an excellent source of information about who had shown how much and where up to that point in time plus other interesting statistics). We had a whole room filled with beautiful cats, with matching cage curtains, cat toys for the judges, lots of photos, articles, and items with Turkish Vans on them. Dusty and Weems got to the heart of the matter by supplying great eats for everyone -Turkish delights beautifully set up in the middle of the room where the CFA Board could snack while looking at the cats.

It is important to note that Vantastix, as a collection of dedicated Turkish Van breeders, was essentially functioning as a breed club long before CFA officially recognized it. After the long six-year road to championship, many Vantastix members were exhausted and the focal point for our club was diminished. A tremendous amount of paperwork and record-keeping, in addition to showing, was required to document the basis for advancing the breed. It is our opinion that the Turkish Vans would not have been granted championship status for 1994-95 if it had not been for Vantastix.

While interest in the Vans never dimmed, the enthusiasm of original club members faltered for a few years as personal trials and tribulations were prevalent. Fortunately, enthusiastic new breeders came on to the scene to carry the torch for the breed. Vantastix became rejuvenated once more with the extremely successful breed seminar held on June 13 in Chicago during the 1996 CFA Annual meeting. Although sponsored by our breed council, Vantastix members Deborah Hayes, Karen Hooker, Marty Low-Swan, Diane Marcus and Debbie Rexelle were in attendance with their cats, along with Linda Gorsuch and her cat, and Tracy Petty. The judges

workbook, written by members Deborah Hayes and Karen Hooker, was very comprehensive as was the slide presentation and handling of the cats.

Where does Vantastix go from here? It is time to look ahead and unite to promote the Turkish Van, educate new breeders, fellow exhibitors, spectators, and judges. The Vantastix membership includes a wonderful mix of the old and new guard and an intermingling of tradition and new ideas. This is the best recipe for progress and our future.

Listing of Original Vantastix Members:

Anne Dunnivan	Erin-Sky Eliot	William Fagan
Joe and Debra Frahm	Charles Hawkes-Vice Pres.	Deborah* (Treas) and Steve Hayes
Karen Hooker*-Sec.	Marty Low-Swan*	Celeste Morvay
Elizabeth Nelson	Linda O'Neal and Megan Brown	Barbara* and Jack Reark
Debra Rexelle*-Pres.	Linda Stitzinger	Frank and Laura Szablowski
Ann and Charles Van Brunt	Carol Van Orden	Doug Williams and Carol Simpson*

Dusty Rainbolt\*

*Those marked by an asterisk are still active members.*

Members who Joined Shortly Thereafter:

Weems Hutto	Lisa Ostrander	Dolores Roper*
Tonya and Anetta Young*		